

# THE DIAL

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## APPROACHES TO REMY DE GOURMONT

BY KENNETH BURKE

### I

*Notre civilisation, en devenant démocratique, s'est mise à tout prendre au sérieux.—*

LA MORALE DE L'AMOUR

IN his essay on women and language, de Gourmont comments on the tendency of the young males to burn up the race, and adds that certain Asiatic peoples are extinct not on account of their lack of spirit, but because they had too much of it. De Gourmont himself began his career at a time when quite one of the most feverish attempts in the history of European art was being made to burn up the race. The group of young males that gathered around Mallarmé, with their aesthetic of symbolism, and their philosophy of idealism, were, as de Gourmont proudly showed in one of his early insolent polemics, on the road to intellectual anarchism. If each man was his own world—and surely, there are certain poems of Mallarmé which we can only spy at quizzically, as one might look through a 'scope at Venus under favourable conditions—it was inevitable that each man should have his own tongue. Although the reduction to absurdity of individualism in art is to spend one's life in talking to oneself, they were all too potent, too spirited, to be disturbed by reductions to absurdity. If that was the quintessence of symbolism, then there was nothing to do but talk to oneself; the movement *per se* was its justification.

All this fever of innovation was decried by the papas of the university under the name of decadence, although de Gourmont shows in his *Mallarmé et l'Idée de Décadence* that the historical significance of *décadisme* was that of times when the creative instinct was at its lowest, not at its suicidally highest. But it has always been the character of young rebels to carry their unfriendly appellations scrawled in gold on their banners, with the result that the curse has become more and more alluring, and nearly always signifies a writer who has invented some distinctive element for himself. De Gourmont, in contraposition to the standard sterility of the Académie, is a decadent.

To be a decadent, by another association of ideas, is to uphold the infamous *L'art-pour-l'art*. De Gourmont always had much too strong a detestation for democratic standards to be anything but a disciple of Art for Art's Sake. In *Une Nuit au Luxembourg* he says,

"The process of thinking is a sport, although this sport must be free and harmonious. The more it is looked upon as useless, the more one feels the need of making it beautiful. Beauty—that is perhaps its only possible value."

And in one of his essays,

"To admit art because it can uplift the masses or the individual, is like admitting the rose because we can extract from roses a medicine for the eyes."

To be an artist is to feed an appetite, and nothing more. Rooted in the *Welt als Wille* of Schopenhauer, and the Olympianism of Nietzsche, de Gourmont would naturally accept art as a sort of self-justifying urge or energy; and anyway, anything was justified to de Gourmont by the mere fact of its existence.

All this, of course, is hardly startling by now. There are enough pimply adolescents going about with chunks of live-your-own-life in their mouths to make it almost impossible to be seen with a volume of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, and if one happens to like Huysmans he has to explain himself uncomfortably for at least half an hour unless his auditor happens to be more than ordinarily acute. My point is simply to emphasize the free basis on which de Gour-

mont began his writing, and what opportunities it might offer to an active mentality. The theories of individualism in art resulted in his being at liberty to develop his medium as he saw fit; but the unconscious intention behind his work, the desire to communicate, checked the absurdity of the theories, with the result that we have from de Gourmont some forty volumes of graceful and intelligent writing in a multitude of mediums.

Another factor which insured the liberty of his writing was the uneventfulness of his life. Until just before his death, there was no element of social experience strong enough to disturb him with its prejudices. For years he lived alone with his books, seen by a few intimates; for experience, he had his tomes, for vitality, the beating of his own veins. We might say of him what he said of France: "*un pays qui possède, avec l'Italie, la littérature la plus libre de l'Europe et la plus délicieusement érotique.*"

Beyond a few dates, the facts of de Gourmont's life are rare. He was too subtle-minded to have a life of cataclysms, too intelligent for personal tragedy, and there is no evidence that the greatest of all ogres, financial difficulty, came to disturb him. On the whole, there was nothing to compel the direction of his mind; he was left with what he would call the "illusion of liberty."

Remy de Gourmont was born on the fourth of April, 1858, in the Château de la Motte, at Bazoches-en-Houlme, in the Orne. He came of a very old family that had settled in Normandy back in the times of tradition, and claimed descent from a prince of Denmark, a nephew of an old King Gormon. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries many of the Gourmonts were savants, painters, philosophers, and printers, and as is always told in a life of de Gourmont, his ancestor Gilles was the first to introduce Greek and Hebrew characters into France. In addition to this line, which is impressive enough, he could claim by his maternal grandmother to belong to the family of François de Malherbe.

When he was about ten, his parents moved to a manor-house at Mesnil-Villeman, in the Manche, described in the anonymous appendix to *Pendant l'Orage* as a *petit château bâti au bord d'un étang, encerclé de bois de hêtres*, evidently a spot of highly standard romance. After showing an early aptitude at the *lycée*, he studied law at Caen, where at the same time he went on with his interest in

literature, "*et commença de vivre.*" In 1883 he finally came to Paris to begin his life as a man of letters, and found occupation almost immediately in the Bibliothèque Nationale. For the next eight years he remained there, writing during this time some scientific articles of vulgarization; but in 1891 his connections with the library were suddenly brought to a close by his publication in the *Mercure de France* of an anti-chauvinistic article, *Le Joujou Patriotisme*. It was about this time also that he suffered the beginning of a malady which is alluded to only vaguely by his friends, but which kept him for the most of his life confined to his rooms in the Rue des Saints-Pères.

In 1890 Sixtine appeared, his first important work, although a novel *Merlette* existed as early as 1886. This was soon followed by a volume of research and erudition, *Le Latin Mystique*, in which he actually studied the poets Huysmans had utilized so airily in *A Rebours* without knowing. From now on dates a remarkable activity which soon started the rumour in Parisian literary circles that Remy de Gourmont was a group of writers using one pseudonym. There were no further incidents in his life. It seems that to the end of his days, his exterior life was that of an abstemious but cultured friar. Besides his knowledge of the standard names in philosophy and literature, his familiarity with Latin opened up to him a great fund of mediaeval misery and error, and many a wicked volume which he frankly admired for its lubricity. He remained, until his death, a man closed in his study, living almost exclusively with books, yet one who never wrote a sentence that did not have in it the flux of a spontaneous emotion.

He died during the war, on the evening of September 27, 1915, and like Flaubert, whose life is so parallel in many ways, he died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Both men finally succumbed to the mere mass of emotion and erudition they had heaped upon their brains. Flaubert hated stupidity; de Gourmont loved intelligence; each implies the other, but to hate stupidity all one's life will result in one's becoming sacrificed to it, whereas the emphasis on the love of intelligence is the beginning of a free and easy creation. And could Flaubert ever have understood this? "You have finally got to such a degree of imbecility that you look upon work not only as honourable, but as sacred, when in reality it is only a dire necessity." Such is the Olympianism of the "illusion of liberty."



## II

*L'intelligence est un accident;  
le génie est une catastrophe.—*

LE SUCCÈS ET L'IDÉE DE BEAUTÉ

Super-Copernican, de Gourmont was not content with denying the world as the centre of the universe; he also denies man as the centre of the world. He found in Darwin "*la pudibonderie religieuse de sa race*," and the purely theological tendency, even while endangering the old religion, to place man as the ultimate aim of nature. He insisted that man was neither first nor last upon the earth. The privileges of humanity were hardly more than an accident, if one could speak of an accident in nature, and this accident might just as well have happened to another species, indeed, may still happen. Intelligence is perhaps an improper functioning of the instincts, or the beginning of instincts which have not yet crystallized—which would mean that the bee or the ant had gone farther in evolution than man. In his *Physique de l'Amour*, he says, "Man is not at the pinnacle of nature; he is *in* nature, one of the units of life, and nothing more." The purpose of this book was to "place the sexual life of man in the one and only scheme of universal sexuality." De Gourmont never forgot that a man is of no more importance in relation to the stars than a grasshopper. Nor did he forget that a man in relation to himself is of tremendous importance.

Thus, while emphasizing the futility of the human race as a whole, he also affirmed the all-importance of the individual. Descartes' *cogito; ergo sum*, he says somewhere, is so simple, so rudimentary that any savage could probably understand it. Humanity is an abstraction, but the isolated human has cravings to satisfy and pains to avoid; it is these exclusively personal experiences which are important so long as sensation endures. De Gourmont has little time for those perfect systems of government wherein the aggregate of humanity is to be made happy at the expense of each individual. "Let us accept as sufficient this theorem: What is useful to the bee is useful to the hive."

This composite of conflicting attitudes gives the work of de Gourmont a cautious equilibrium. It is Santayana, I believe, who makes the distinction between the "material basis of life" and "life's

spiritual fulfilment." Someone like Zola would exemplify an exclusive grasp of the material basis; the yearning of the Middle Ages for the City of God would be an exclusive grasp of the spiritual fulfilment. De Gourmont, with his insistence upon the unimportance of humanity and the importance of man, his conception of the intelligence as a disease or an error along with his enthusiasm over the beauty of a perfectly functioning intelligence, his balance of man as an animal over against man as something distinct from all animals, attains that healthy equipollence of material basis and spiritual fulfilment which we usually hand over to the Greeks without reading them.

It is with this method of double-attitude that he approaches everything. Thoroughly godless, for instance, he has always manifested a passionate interest in Catholicism. His first important work of erudition, *Le Latin Mystique*, is an anthology, with partial translations and comment, of "the poets of the antiphonary, and Symbolism in the Middle Ages." His *Chemin de Velours* is an analysis of Pascal and the Jesuits. But as one might expect, his sympathy for Catholicism is hardly likely to earn for him the benediction of Rome. For he admires Catholicism in that it is preserving the rich pagan institutions over against the aridity of Protestantism. Mere matters of creed mean nothing to him; he is interested in the Church merely as a form of beauty. He observes with regret that before the Reformation the Church was incorporating the elements of paganism as fast as necessary; as one of the proofs of this he gives a list of Italian tutelary deities, and a parallel list of saints of the calendar the Church has incorporated to replace them. He gives another list of pagan temples taken over by the Christians, with the ancient derivation showing through their names. Further, he points out that the Greek God Orpheus, who often figures in early Christian art, was accepted as a prophet by no less an authority than St Augustine. "A pure Christianity would have rejected the entire Pythagorean system; Catholicism, true to its name, has handed down to us, along with the religion of Christ, nearly all the superstitions and all the theogonies of the Orient." It is not the Protestant Revolution which distresses de Gourmont, but the Catholic Reformation. From then on the existence of beauty in the Church has been precarious; Church art practically ceased; the Church had been Christianized.

*"Il y a un art catholique; il n'y a pas d'art chrétien; le christianisme évangélique est essentiellement opposé à toute représentation de la beauté sensible, soit d'après le corps humain, soit d'après le reste de la nature."*

As an inevitable corollary to such an attitude towards the Church, was de Gourmont's insistence upon the dignity of sex. Although I do not recall his ever mentioning the name of a psychoanalyst—and he is always frank about his sources—the theories of Freud and his epigons are continually finding expression in his works. "The mistake of treating man's brain as the absolute centre of the man is both fortunate and commendable, but it is a mistake. The only natural aim of man is that of reproduction." Or from another angle, *"La beauté est si bien sexuelle que les seules œuvres d'art incontestées sont celles qui montrent tout bonnement le corps humain dans sa nudité."* By its insistence on remaining purely sexual, Greek statuary has lifted itself forever above all discussion."

But all this is only one phase of his sympathy with the life of the senses. De Gourmont is even more thoroughly an Epicurean than Anatole France. He says in *Le Chemin de Velours* that "Voluptuousity is a creation of man, a delicate art in which only a few are especially proficient, like music or painting." *Une Nuit au Luxembourg* contains a new apology for Epicurus.

"My friend, for some centuries now the schools have been poisoning your sensibilities and strangling your intelligence by making you believe that the pleasures of Epicurus were exclusively pleasures of the mind. Epicurus was too wise to disdain any sort of pleasure. He wanted to know, and he did know, all the satisfactions which can become the satisfactions of men; he abused nothing, but he used everything, in his life of harmony."

In the closing chapter of his *Physique de l'Amour* he has a long, enthusiastic period: *"Tout n'est que luxure. . . . L'animal ignore la diversité, l'accumulation des aptitudes; l'homme seul est luxurieux."* M Paul Delior, in his *Remy de Gourmont et Son Œuvre*, illustrates the attitude of de Gourmont by citing the three souls of Plato: the *voûs*, mind, intelligence, located in the head; the *θυμός*, passions, emotions, located in the breast; the *ἐπιθυμητικόν*

with all the appetites which assure the conservation of the individual and of the race, located in the stomach, and according to Plato a ferocious beast but which we must nurture in order to exist. De Gourmont not only admired the purest activities of the intellect, and the play of the sensibilities, but also recognized the dignity of the appetites, understood that they are an excellent base on which to erect the superstructure of intelligence and sensibility.

De Gourmont discovered himself for his critics when he used the word "dissociations." De Gourmont is a dissociator, which is to say that he examines a concept which we take as a unit and finds that it can be subdivided. "Man associates his ideas, not in accordance with logic, or verifiable exactitude, but in accordance with his desires and his interests." In his essay, *La Dissociation des Idées*, de Gourmont lets himself loose with this method, and produces a type of writing which is delightfully exact. After defining the origin of the commonplace, he gives as an example, the association of ideas Byzantium—decadence. He then goes over to the nature of morality, and the reasonable probability that the individual can develop more conveniently in immorality; but morality is the determination to preserve the race at the expense of the individual. From this he gets to the association carnal pleasure—generation, as the foundation of sexual morality. Yet the true association, he claims, is that of intellectuality—infecundity. Christianity, however, did make one remarkable dissociation, that of love and carnal pleasure. Thus was the love of brother and sister made possible. I recall that in his Octavius, Minucius Felix found it necessary to refute the Roman scandal about the Christian "brotherly love." De Gourmont, as also Minucius, uses the instance of the Egyptians, who could not understand love without sexual conjunction. From this point he gallops on, next to take up Joan of Arc, and the conflicting associations she brings up in an English and a French mind. Soon he has arrived at the army, showing how at one time the military was associated with high honour; then came scandals, and the mistake was just as radically the other way, the military becoming associated with nothing but complete dishonour. So he goes on running his scales, and ends with a list that he has not troubled to examine, but which seem to fall apart by the mere clarity of their juxtaposition: virtue—recompense; wrong—punishment; God—goodness; crime—remorse; duty—happiness; future—progress.

The philosophical writings of de Gourmont are a continual rain of ideas, some new, some borrowed, but all enlivened by the eagerness of his intelligence.

## III

*Enfin il (Jéhovah) lui souffle dans  
les narines et dit: Lève-toi. Ton  
nom est Lilith.*

*Lilith se dresse . . . : Donne-moi  
l'homme, Seigneur.*

LILITH

An author who lives most of his life in his head must perform his transgressions on paper. There was many a wild act more or less definitely spelled out in de Gourmont's ink. In his fiction, the graceful libertinage of the man is perhaps one of his predominant qualities. He seemed to prefer the contemplation of easy conquests, of women that were at once refined and ready of access, and men who were frankly satyrs. As a matter of course, Diomede attains all women except Christine, and she is immune only because she does not exist. True, in Sixtine, d'Entragues is baffled, but it is his endless ratiocination that defeats him; and as recompense, this same ratiocination aids him in the last chapter to console himself, and reach "*le repos finale*," an excellent mock-Victorian "In Conclusion." In *Un Coeur Virginal*, the leading character fails with the heroine because he is dangerously nearing his fifties, and de Gourmont is writing the physiology of virginity; it is part of the physiology that a younger man should win. With this one important exception, as he developed his method de Gourmont seemed to profit more and more by his "illusion of liberty," until in the *Lettres d'un Satyre*, we have as hero a complete Olympian, who treats his women as flowers in the approved Goethe fashion—*Röslein, Röslein, Röslein rot!*—and plucks them where he will.

Blasphemy is another element which keeps turning up now and then, blasphemy and sacrilege. *Le Fantôme*, for instance, is a perverse account of a courtship which he has wrapped with mysticism by utilizing the language of the ritual. It is a pagan plot made

highly churchy, with a fictitious mass incorporated into it to celebrate the glory of love. However, in a personality as rich as that of de Gourmont, blasphemy can never be mere insolence or cheap derision. It is often the expression of the religious inclination in an intelligence which cannot believe. Since it is impossible to praise the divinities with sincerity, there is nothing left but to insult them. Blasphemy is a serious experiment, a transgression by means of the sins of others. To blaspheme is to restore the dying gods that one may renounce them; it is the struggle of an emotional nature, a protest against the intellect which tends to make it sterile of religious ecstasy. Some of his blasphemous poems have a peculiar warmth, or coolness, like that of a body which has just died. Blasphemy is perverse, yes, but it is not a pose, not an Oscanian attitude.

The less versatile author devotes his early years of writing to acquiring a vein, a field to exploit with slight variations for the rest of his days. He is incomplete until he has attained his stride; once he has fallen into this stride, however, he jogs along contentedly enough until he is dimmed with senility or hushed by disaster. But de Gourmont was continually finding new elements to handle. It is true that he stopped moving in the direction of style after he had reached a perfect lubrication of phrase—why should he go on!—but the nature of his books themselves is never the same in two successive volumes. Like a rough little mountain stream, he cuts a new path after every rain. Over against the opulent tangles of *Sixtine*, lumbering on with its baggage of erudite irony and rhetorical excursions, is the heavily oiled *Une Nuit au Luxembourg*, advancing as easily as a snake. There is the nearly conventional novel, *Un Coeur Virginal*, with complications, opportune disclosures, and the like; but there is also *Les Chevaux de Diomède*, “a little novel of possible adventures, with thought, act, dream, and sensuality exposed on the same plan and analysed with an equal good will.” His fantastic stories written when symbolism was in its first rich glow are counterbalanced by things like the *Histoires Magiques*, a peculiarly nasty mixture of the romantic and the realist. And scattered in among this pliant fiction, are his criticisms, grammatical writings, works of scientific research, philosophical essays, notes on contemporary society, discussions of art and literature, and an occasional poem. De Gourmont’s verse is that of a discriminating dilettante, with a complicated artificial sincerity and a distinct technical



flavour. In an early essay, de Gourmont affirms the abnormality of the individual, while at the same time he sees art as the expression of the individual. Art, then, is a distinctly personal matter, an exemplification of what is more or less subconscious in oneself. Consequently, there is absolutely no reason at all why he should not write as he wishes. After one has been buried for a week or two in the volumes of de Gourmont, one is simply dumbfounded before the endless pudencies and trite delicacies of the usual author. Refinement, to de Gourmont, does not consist in misnaming and lascivious innuendo, or in an old-maidish "that were better avoided"; but on the contrary, refinement is the capacity for treating subtly and intelligently of everything, of discovering *just* values and *exact* appellations, of expressing oneself with suppleness. Then again, de Gourmont has little care for the profoundest aesthetic principle of modern democratic art: "Yes sir, you might ha' met them thar people right here in Waynesville." The mere mechanism of reality does not interest him; Élade, Phocas, Vitalis, Pascase, Diomède, Théodat, Régeline, Phenissa, an enumeration of the names of his characters would show well enough that he could hardly expect to see his work flanked with the infallible evidences of greatness, advertisements for cold cream and automobile tires, or have his "set" heralded in a club-offer with Kipling given away.

The Académie never fails, and the institution which neglected to crown Balzac, Baudelaire, Flaubert, and Mallarmé also ignored de Gourmont. Bazin, Bourget, and Bordeaux were duly canonized, as was fitting for such representative platitudinarians. But the Académie never fails; if de Gourmont was neglected, it must be that he was one of the finest writers of his century.

## IV

*Mes idées sont mobilisées.—*

PENDANT L'ORAGE

In his highly pietistic introduction to *Pendant la Guerre*, Jean de Gourmont finds that

"in spite of the echo of the battle, and that atmosphere of anguish in which we were all plunged, the writer's hand had not trembled,

nor his brain; never perhaps, has Remy de Gourmont attained as in these few months, such clarity of style and of thought stripped of all vain metaphor, all vain literature."

One was supposed to write such stuff during the war, but now that things are clearing up again, I wonder if any one could honestly claim that the war had brought to de Gourmont a greater "clarity of thought." For here, like poor Diomède of twenty years earlier, de Gourmont had at last slipped against life, and had to suffer the overbalancing of his intellect by his emotions. At last a social force had appeared which was strong enough to break through his detachment, and as Diomède finally accepted the ideal of the sluggish Pascase, so de Gourmont half fell in with the universal licking of blood that for five years was supposed to be the purest expression of humanity.

Once he had written,

"Detachment is the most aristocratic of all aristocratic attitudes. . . . We should take part in the game, and with pleasure, but not with passion. Passion disqualifies; it is the proof of an elementary organism, without serious co-ordination." . . .

*"Toutes les questions qui agitent les peuples, émeuvent les individus, acquièrent . . . l'importance du fêtu qui révolutionne une formilière."*

And again, in *La Création Subconsciente*, he remarks that a man loses his personality in acting sympathetically with a great number of people. Thus, de Gourmont himself has furnished us with reasons to distrust his sudden blaze of patriotism. And whatever may be said in favour of a blaze of patriotism, we have it on his own authority that it can hardly be admired as an aid to greater clarity of style and thought.

No, de Gourmont was now cast against life for the first time. The war had startled him out of his theory, deprived him of the purity of his Epicureanism. The vigour of his intelligence, it seems, had delayed as far as old age the struggle with vital forces that most of us have experienced before twenty. Until now, he had succeeded in saddling his emotions with ideas; but the war, which was hardly more than an irritation to so many, became an over-

whelming flood to him. For the most part, his war books are the magnificent ruins of a great intelligence. Suddenly de Gourmont needed his god; and since the godlessness of his youth was mobility, his god became certainty. He still retained his keenness, and in most cases his leisure, but the full force of the war, the threat of France's being destroyed, called for affirmation, for patriotic dogmatizing. De Gourmont joined the swarm *pour la patrie*, and trained his learned barrage upon the barbarians. The spirit of irony, of contradiction, of impersonality, that ultimate flavour of his versatility which made him an exquisite writer, had dropped away.

But even the ruins of de Gourmont are of no ordinary nature. Never, during the entire war, did he degenerate to the level of a war editorial. He is not one of those who would howl about Nietzsche, for he recognized that Nietzsche was one of the most important moralists of the time; and further, there is Nietzsche in every sentence he wrote. He admitted the value of German music. He managed to keep reasonably clean of the "regeneration" mud, the thesis which is the reason for existence of three-fourths of the present novel-manufacturing industry of England, the song that the war must create a profound change in everyone. The trouble was, he always had his *but*, since the formula was that the enemy was *always* wrong. He seemed to have forgotten his own dissociation method, he was so busy helping to nourish the association, enemy—turpitude.

Perhaps de Gourmont could no longer contradict, but he could still modify. He recognized that the basis of this war, as of every war, was the pugnacity natural to all individual or collective egos. Even the trumpeted atrocities he sometimes defended as a corollary of the war-spirit. He blamed the war on militarism, although militarism to de Gourmont was not a term in economics; de Gourmont could always talk more enthusiastically of man in comparison with his analysis of a sea mollusc than he could from consideration of the industrial revolution. At basis, the present war for him, aside from the painful fact that it was his own personal friends who were dying, was no different from some unwritten event of pre-history, some struggle with stones and clubs.

In *Une Nuit au Luxembourg*, where "Lui" is carrying on a discussion of the possible destruction of the human race, he dismisses

the idea of some great cataclysm like an explosion or the collision with a comet, not because it is improbable, but because it is too crude, too broadly theatrical, to interest him. Judging from the development of de Gourmont's writing during the war, it seems that if he had lived, perhaps the war would have suffered the same fate with him. Gradually the almost brooding quality of his early notes on the war disappears; he becomes more and more discursive, with more emphasis on the purely theoretical and observational, in other words, the essentially egotistic. He is in the war much the way one would be on the sea or in the mountains; since it is the most prevailing fact, he talks about it.

In *La Culture des Idées* he had written, "*La diabolique Intelligence rit des exorcismes, et l'eau bénite de l'Université n'a jamais pu la stériliser, non plus que celle de l'Église.*" And he might have added, "*ou de la guerre,*" for at the time of his death he was planning *La Physique des Mœurs*, a book entirely free of the war.

The chief works of Remy de Gourmont available in English are: *A Night in the Luxembourg*, translated by Arthur Ransome and *Philosophic Nights in Paris*, translated by Isaac Goldberg, published by John W. Luce and Company, Boston; and *Decadence and Other Essays on the Culture of Ideas*, translated by William Aspenwall Bradley, shortly to be issued by Harcourt, Brace and Howe, New York.

## SIX POEMS

BY JOSEPH CAMPBELL

### "SPRING EVER RETURNING"

Spring ever returning,  
Cowslips thro' ages burning,  
Rainbows never going,  
Lark-song like water flowing.  
    Only bayonets rust and die  
    Under the madness of God's eye.

### FRAOCHANS

(Bilberries)

No hand but a fairy's hand  
Out of a dim, imagined land  
Should pick these berries—for what day  
Ever lighted less than they?  
Or night gathered starry wings  
Over fainter-shadowed things?

### HARVEST

The garden swells with harvest.  
Red as the moon of night  
Apples cluster on the wall;  
Marrows, fat and white,  
Creep out of their borders;  
Finches haunt the corn.  
—*Be patient, heavy woman,  
Your child will soon be born.*

## "MY SONG IS AS A WATER-FIND"

My song is as a water-find  
That bubbles from the hollow earth,  
A shell the sea has left behind,  
A burning faggot on the hearth,  
A vagrant garden air that blows  
Sweet with perfume of stock or rose.

I know no more of why I sing  
Than does the chaffinch in the tree;  
I am an elemental thing,  
Folded about with mystery,  
God-begotten, born of dust—  
I sing my song because I must.

## SATURN

I see the star, Aldebaran,  
Slowly lift a jewelled can  
To dying Helios; bright in air,  
The gold of Berenice's hair;  
And, swung dimly thro' the trees,  
Seven-lanterned Pleiades.  
Pale as ivory, overhead  
Cassiopeia takes to bed  
A blacker king than Cepheus,  
Father of the negroes' house.  
Boötes halts his breathing team  
To water in the blue star-stream,  
Where Cygnus swims, a bird of light,  
Between the clouded banks of night,  
And strong Orion languishes,  
Hurt with the reeds of Artemis.  
Red Antares' burning mouth  
Makes a rose of the white south;  
Lyra tunes her cithora;



And from a graven amphora,  
A sweet-crusted Hyblaeon jar,  
Sirius, the honey-star,  
Scatters the magic midnight dew  
On bugloss and bramble-blow.  
Every single star I see  
In the vault's immensity  
But lean-ribbed Saturn, dark and proud.  
Shunner of the heavenly crowd,  
Why shunnest thou the child that Earth  
Bore to thee with troubled birth:  
Thinkest thou not that my dream-eyes  
Can pierce the armour of the skies—  
Lay bare thy triple-cinctured rings,  
Yellower than the tongues of kings,  
Thy satellites, Enceladus  
And Mimas, and the overplus  
Of fiery-motes that leap and roll  
About thy solitary soul?  
I am thy child by Earth, thy wife,  
And share thy moods and live thy life,  
Lean-ribbed Saturn, dark and proud,  
Shunner of the heavenly crowd!

## THE LITTLE YELLOW ROAD

*(From the Gaelic. The original was taken down by Eoin Mac-Neill from Michael MacRudhraighe in County Mayo, July, 1894.)*

I am sick, sick,  
No part of me sound;  
The heart in my middle  
Dies of its wound,  
Pining the time  
When she did stand  
With me shoulder to shoulder  
And hand in hand.

## SIX POEMS

I travelled west  
By the little yellow road  
In the hope I might see  
Where my Secret abode.  
White were her two breasts,  
Red her hair,  
Guiding the cow  
And the weaned calf, her care.

Until wine flows  
From this stream west,  
Until a green plain spreads  
On the withered crest,  
And white fields grow  
The heather above,  
My heart will not find  
Kindness from my love.

There's a flood in the river  
Will not ebb till day,  
And dread on me  
That my love is away.  
Can I live a month  
With my heart's pain  
Unless she will come  
And see me again?

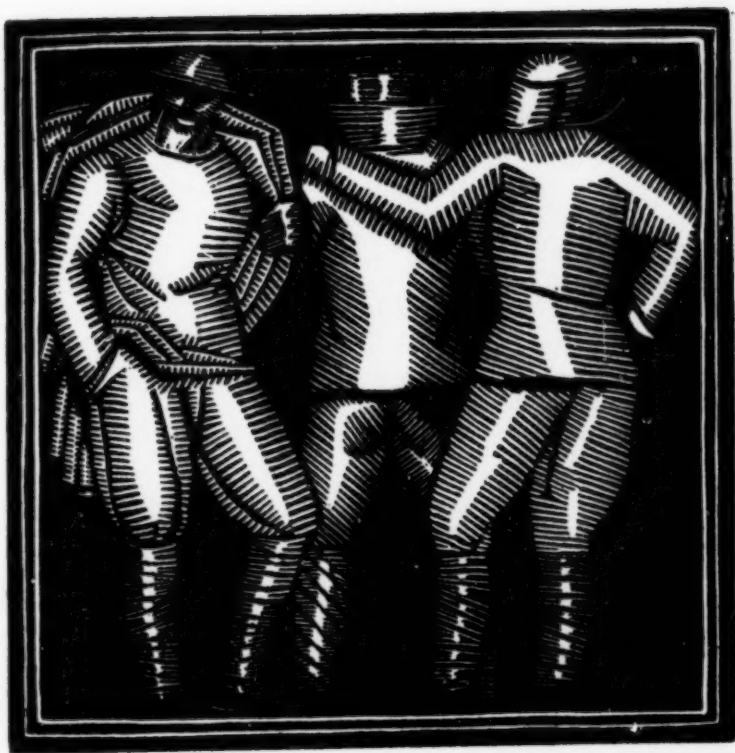
I drink a measure  
And I drink to you,  
I pay, I pay,  
And I pay for two.  
Copper for ale  
And silver for beer—  
And do you like coming  
Or staying here?



*Courtesy of the Folsom Galleries*

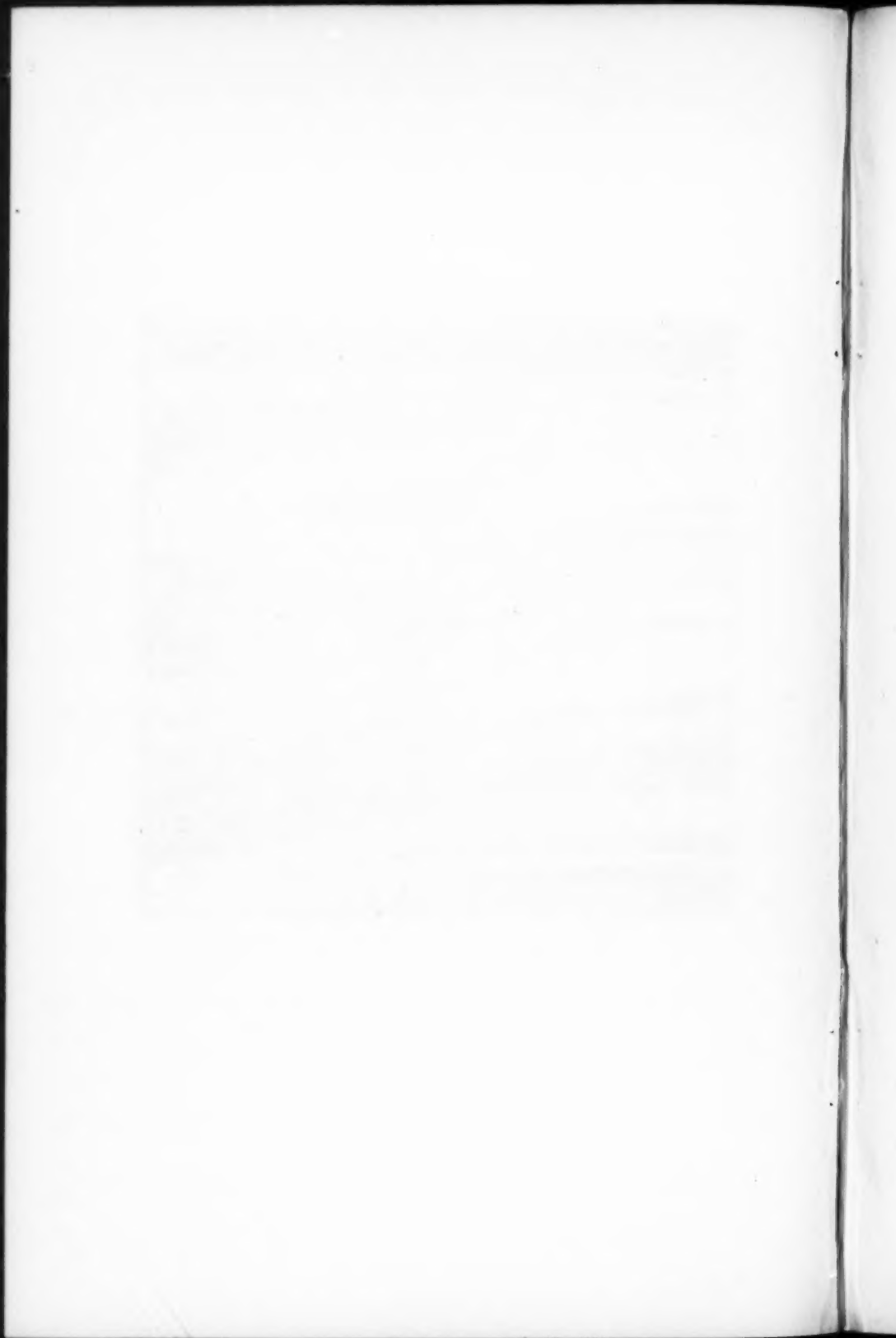
**WINTER. BY JOHN STORRS**





*Courtesy of the Folsom Galleries*

WOUNDED SOLDIERS. BY JOHN STORRS







*Courtesy of the Folsom Galleries*

THE SPIRIT OF THE NIGHT. BY JOHN STORRS



## THE NEW ENGLANDER

BY SHERWOOD ANDERSON

HER name was Elsie Leander and her girlhood was spent on her father's farm in Vermont. For several generations the Leanders had all lived on the same farm and had all married thin women, and so she was thin. The farm lay in the shadow of a mountain and the soil was not very rich. From the beginning and for several generations there had been a great many sons and few daughters in the family. The sons had gone west or to New York City and the daughters had stayed at home and thought such thoughts as come to New England women who see the sons of their father's neighbours slipping away, one by one, into the West.

Her father's house was a small white frame affair, and when you went out at the back door, past a small barn and a chicken house, you got into a path that ran up the side of a hill and into an orchard. The trees were all old and gnarled. At the back of the orchard the hill dropped away and bare rocks showed.

Inside the fence a large grey rock stuck high up out of the ground. As Elsie sat with her back to the rock, with a mangled hillside at her feet, she could see several large mountains, apparently but a short distance away, and between herself and the mountains lay many tiny fields surrounded by neatly built stone walls. Everywhere rocks appeared. Large ones, too heavy to be moved, stuck out of the ground in the centre of the fields. The fields were like cups filled with a green liquid that turned grey in the fall and white in the winter. The mountains, far off but apparently near at hand, were like giants ready at any moment to reach out their hands and take the cups one by one and drink off the green liquid. The large rocks in the fields were like the thumbs of the giants.

Elsie had three brothers, born ahead of her, but they had all gone away. Two of them had gone to live with her uncle in the West and her elder brother had gone to New York City where he had married and prospered. All through his youth and manhood her father had worked hard and had lived a hard life, but his son in New York City had begun to send money home, and after that

things went better. He still worked every day about the barn or in the fields but he did not worry about the future. Elsie's mother did house work in the mornings and in the afternoons sat in a rocking chair in her tiny living room and thought of her sons while she crocheted table covers and tidies for the backs of chairs. She was a silent woman, very thin and with very thin bony hands. She did not ease herself into a rocking chair but sat down and got up suddenly, and when she crocheted her back was as straight as the back of a drill sergeant.

The mother rarely spoke to the daughter. Sometimes in the afternoons as the younger woman went up the hillside to her place by the rock at the back of the orchard, her father came out of the barn and stopped her. He put a hand on her shoulder and asked where she was going. "To the rock," she said and her father laughed. His laughter was like the creaking of a rusty barn door hinge and the hand he had laid on her shoulder was thin like her own hands and like her mother's hands. The father went into the barn shaking his head. "She's like her mother. She is herself like a rock," he thought. At the head of the path that led from the house to the orchard there was a great cluster of bayberry bushes. The New England farmer came out of his barn to watch his daughter go along the path, but she had disappeared behind the bushes. He looked away past his house to the fields and to the mountains in the distance. He also saw the green cup-like fields and the grim mountains. There was an almost imperceptible tightening of the muscles of his half worn-out old body. For a long time he stood in silence and then, knowing from long experience the danger of having thoughts, he went back into the barn and busied himself with the mending of an agricultural tool that had been mended many times before.

The son of the Leanders who went to live in New York City was the father of one son, a thin sensitive boy who looked like Elsie. The son died when he was twenty-three years old and some years later the father died and left his money to the old people on the New England farm. The two Leanders who had gone west had lived there with their father's brother, a farmer, until they grew into manhood. Then Will, the younger, got a job on a railroad. He was killed one winter morning. It was a cold snowy day and when the freight train he was in charge

of as conductor left the city of Des Moines, he started to run over the tops of the cars. His feet slipped and he shot down into space. That was the end of him.

Of the new generation there was only Elsie and her brother Tom, whom she had never seen, left alive. Her father and mother talked of going west to Tom for two years before they came to a decision. Then it took another year to dispose of the farm and make preparations. During the whole time Elsie did not think much about the change about to take place in her life.

The trip west on the railroad train jolted Elsie out of herself. In spite of her detached attitude toward life she became excited. Her mother sat up very straight and stiff in the seat in the sleeping car and her father walked up and down in the aisle. After a night when the younger of the two women did not sleep but lay awake with red burning cheeks and with her thin fingers incessantly picking at the bed-clothes in her berth while the train went through towns and cities, crawled up the sides of hills and fell down into forest-clad valleys, she got up and dressed to sit all day looking at a new kind of land. The train ran for a day and through another sleepless night in a flat land where every field was as large as a farm in her own country. Towns appeared and disappeared in a continual procession. The whole land was so unlike anything she had ever known that she began to feel unlike herself. In the valley where she had been born and where she had lived all her days everything had an air of finality. Nothing could be changed. The tiny fields were chained to the earth. They were fixed in their places and surrounded by aged stone walls. The fields like the mountains that looked down at them were as unchangeable as the passing days. She had a feeling they had always been so, would always be so.

Elsie sat like her mother upright in the car seat and with a back like the back of a drill sergeant. The train ran swiftly along through Ohio and Indiana. Her thin hands like her mother's hands were crossed and locked. One passing casually through the car might have thought both women prisoners handcuffed and bound to their seats. Night came on and she again got into her berth. Again she lay awake and her thin cheeks became flushed, but she thought new thoughts. Her hands were no longer gripped together and she did not pick at the bed clothes. Twice during

the night she stretched herself and yawned, a thing she had never in her life done before. The train stopped at a town on the prairies, and as there was something the matter with one of the wheels of the car in which she lay the trainmen came with flaming torches to tinker it. There was a great pounding and shouting. When the train went on its way she wanted to get out of her berth and run up and down in the aisle of the car. The fancy had come to her that the men tinkering with the car wheel were new men out of the new land who had broken with strong hammers the doors of her prison away. They had destroyed for ever the programme she had made for her life.

Elsie was filled with joy at the thought that the train was still going on into the West. She wanted to go on for ever in a straight line into the unknown. She fancied herself no longer on a train and imagined she had become a winged thing flying through space. Her long years of sitting alone by the rock on the New England farm had got her into the habit of expressing her thoughts aloud. Her thin voice broke the silence that lay over the sleeping car and her father and mother, both also lying awake, sat up in their berth to listen.

Tom Leander, the only living male representative of the new generation of Leanders, was a loosely built man of forty inclined to corpulency. At twenty he had married the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, and when his wife inherited some money she and Tom moved into the town of Apple Junction in Iowa where Tom opened a grocery. The venture prospered as did Tom's matrimonial venture. When his brother died in New York City and his father, mother, and sister decided to come west Tom was already the father of a daughter and four sons.

On the prairies north of town and in the midst of a vast level stretch of corn fields, there was a partly completed brick house that had belonged to a rich farmer named Russell, who had begun to build the house intending to make it the most magnificent place in the county, but when it was almost completed he had found himself without money and heavily in debt. The farm, consisting of several hundred acres of corn land, had been split into three farms and sold. No one had wanted the huge unfinished brick house.

For years it had stood vacant, its windows staring out over the fields that had been planted almost up to the door.

In buying the Russell house Tom was moved by two motives. He had a notion that in New England the Leanders had been rather magnificent people. His memory of his father's place in the Vermont valley was shadowy, but in speaking of it to his wife he became very definite. "We had good blood in us, we Leanders," he said, straightening his shoulders. "We lived in a big house. We were important people."

Wanting his father and mother to feel at home in the new place, Tom had also another motive. He was not a very energetic man and, although he had done well enough as keeper of a grocery, his success was largely due to the boundless energy of his wife. She did not pay much attention to her household and her children, like little animals, had to take care of themselves, but in any matter concerning the store her word was law.

To have his father the owner of the Russell Place Tom felt would establish him as a man of consequence in the eyes of his neighbours. "I can tell you what, they're used to a big house," he said to his wife. "I tell you what, my people are used to living in style."

The exaltation that had come over Elsie on the train wore away in the presence of grey empty Iowa fields, but something of the effect of it remained with her for months. In the big brick house life went on much as it had in the tiny New England house where she had always lived. The Leanders installed themselves in three or four rooms on the ground floor. After a few weeks the furniture that had been shipped by freight arrived and was hauled out from town in one of Tom's grocery wagons. There were three or four acres of ground covered with great piles of boards the unsuccessful farmer had intended to use in the building of stables. Tom sent men to haul the boards away and Elsie's father prepared to plant a garden. They had come west in April and as soon as they were installed in the house ploughing and planting began in the fields near by. The habit of a lifetime returned to the daughter of the house. In the new place there was no gnarled orchard surrounded by a half-ruined stone fence. All of the fences in all of the fields that stretched away out of sight to the north, south, east, and west were



made of wire and looked like spider webs against the blackness of the ground when it had been freshly ploughed.

There was however the house itself. It was like an island rising out of the sea. In an odd way the house, although it was less than ten years old, was very old. Its unnecessary bigness represented an old impulse in men. Elsie felt that. At the east side there was a door leading to a stairway that ran into the upper part of the house that was kept locked. Two or three stone steps led up to it. Elsie could sit on the top step with her back against the door and gaze into the distance without being disturbed. Almost at her feet began the fields that seemed to go on and on for ever. The fields were like the waters of a sea. Men came to plough and plant. Giant horses moved in a procession across the prairies. A young man who drove six horses came directly toward her. She was fascinated. The breasts of the horses as they came forward with bowed heads seemed like the breasts of giants. The soft spring air that lay over the fields was also like a sea. The horses were giants walking on the floor of a sea. With their breasts they pushed the waters of the sea before them. They were pushing the waters out of the basin of the sea. The young man who drove them was also a giant.

Elsie pressed her body against the closed door at the top of the steps. In the garden back of the house she could hear her father at work. He was raking dry masses of weeds off the ground preparatory to spading the ground for a family garden. He had always worked in a tiny confined place and would do the same thing here. In this vast open place he would work with small tools, doing little things with infinite care, raising little vegetables. In the house her mother would crochet little tidies. She herself would be small. She would press her body against the door of the house, try to get herself out of sight. Only the feeling that sometimes took possession of her, and that did not form itself into a thought, would be large.

The six horses turned at the fence and the outside horse got entangled in the traces. The driver swore vigorously. Then he turned and stared at the pale New Englander and with another oath pulled the heads of the horses about and drove away into the distance. The field in which he was ploughing contained two hundred acres. Elsie did not wait for him to return but went into

the house and sat with folded arms in a room. The house she thought was a ship floating in a sea on the floor of which giants went up and down.

May came and then June. In the great fields work was always going on and Elsie became somewhat used to the sight of the young man in the field that came down to the steps. Sometimes when he drove his horses down to the wire fence he smiled and nodded.

In the month of August, when it is very hot, the corn in Iowa fields grows until the corn stalks resemble young trees. The corn fields become forests. The time for the cultivating of the corn has passed and weeds grow thick between the corn rows. The men with their giant horses have gone away. Over the immense fields silence broods.

When the time of the laying-by of the crop came that first summer after Elsie's arrival in the West her mind, partially awakened by the strangeness of the railroad trip, awakened again. She did not feel like a staid thin woman with a back like the back of a drill sergeant, but like something new and as strange as the new land into which she had come to live. For a time she did not know what was the matter. In the field the corn had grown so high that she could not see into the distance. The corn was like a wall and the little bare spot of land on which her father's house stood was like a house built behind the walls of a prison. For a time she was depressed, thinking that she had come west into a wide open country, only to find herself locked up more closely than ever.

An impulse came to her. She arose and going down three or four steps seated herself almost on a level with the ground.

Immediately she got a sense of release. She could not see over the corn but she could see under it. The corn had long wide leaves that met over the rows. The rows became long tunnels running away into infinity. Out of the black ground grew weeds that made a soft carpet of green. From above light sifted down. The corn rows were mysteriously beautiful. They were warm passageways running out into life. She got up from the steps, and walking timidly to the wire fence that separated her from the field, put her hand between the wires and took hold of one of the corn stalks.

For some reason after she had touched the strong young stalk and had held it for a moment firmly in her hand she grew afraid. Running quickly back to the step she sat down and covered her face with her hands. Her body trembled. She tried to imagine herself crawling through the fence and wandering along one of the passageways. The thought of trying the experiment fascinated but at the same time terrified. She got quickly up and went into the house.

One Saturday night in August Elsie found herself unable to sleep. Thoughts, more definite than any she had ever known before, came into her mind. It was a quiet hot night and her bed stood near a window. Her room was the only one the Leanders occupied on the second floor of the house. At midnight a little breeze came up from the south and when she sat up in bed the floor of corn tassels lying below her line of sight looked in the moonlight like the face of a sea just stirred by a gentle breeze.

A murmuring began in the corn and murmuring thoughts and memories awoke in her mind. The long wide succulent leaves had begun to dry in the intense heat of the August days and as the wind stirred the corn they rubbed against each other. A call, far away, as of a thousand voices arose. She imagined the voices were like the voices of children. They were not like her brother Tom's children, noisy boisterous little animals, but something quite different, tiny little things with large eyes and thin sensitive hands. One after another they crept into her arms. She became so excited over the fancy that she sat up in bed and taking a pillow into her arms held it against her breast. The figure of her cousin, the pale sensitive young Leander who had lived with his father in New York City and who had died at the age of twenty-three, came sharply into her mind. It was as though the young man had come suddenly into the room. She dropped the pillow and sat waiting, intense, expectant.

Young Harry Leander had come to visit his cousin on the New England farm during the late summer of the year before he died. He had stayed there for a month and almost every afternoon had gone with Elsie to sit by the rock at the back of the orchard. One afternoon when they had both been for a long time silent he began

to talk. "I want to go live in the West," he said. "I want to go live in the West. I want to grow strong and be a man," he repeated. Tears came into his eyes.

They got up to return to the house, Elsie walking in silence beside the young man. The moment marked a high spot in her life. A strange trembling eagerness for something she had not realized in her experience of life had taken possession of her. They went in silence through the orchard but when they came to the bayberry bush her cousin stopped in the path and turned to face her. "I want you to kiss me," he said eagerly, stepping toward her.

A fluttering uncertainty had taken possession of Elsie and had been transmitted to her cousin. After he had made the sudden and unexpected demand and had stepped so close to her that his breath could be felt on her cheek, his own cheeks became scarlet and his hand that had taken her hand trembled. "Well, I wish I were strong. I only wish I were strong," he said hesitatingly and turning walked away along the path toward the house.

And in the strange new house, set like an island in its sea of corn, Harry Leander's voice seemed to arise again above the fancied voices of the children that had been coming out of the fields. Elsie got out of bed and walked up and down in the dim light coming through the window. Her body trembled violently. "I want you to kiss me," the voice said again and to quiet it and to quiet also the answering voice in herself she went to kneel by the bed and taking the pillow again into her arms pressed it against her face.

Tom Leander came with his wife and family to visit his father and mother on Sundays. The family appeared at about ten o'clock in the morning. When the wagon turned out of the road that ran past the Russell Place Tom shouted. There was a field between the house and the road and the wagon could not be seen as it came along the narrow way through the corn. After Tom had shouted, his daughter Elizabeth, a tall girl of sixteen, jumped out of the wagon. All five children came tearing toward the house through the corn. A series of wild shouts arose on the still morning air.

The groceryman had brought food from the store. When the

horse had been unhitched and put into a shed he and his wife began to carry packages into the house. The four Leander boys, accompanied by their sister, disappeared into the near-by fields. Three dogs that had trotted out from town under the wagon accompanied the children. Two or three children and occasionally a young man from a neighbouring farm had come to join in the fun. Elsie's sister-in-law dismissed them all with a wave of her hand. With a wave of her hand she also brushed Elsie aside. Fires were lighted and the house reeked with the smell of cooking. Elsie went to sit on the step at the side of the house. The corn fields that had been so quiet rang with shouts and with the barking of dogs.

Tom Leander's oldest child, Elizabeth, was like her mother, full of energy. She was thin and tall like the women of her father's house but very strong and alive. In secret she wanted to be a lady but when she tried her brothers, led by her father and mother, made fun of her. "Don't put on airs," they said. When she got into the country with no one but her brothers and two or three neighbouring farm boys she herself became a boy. With the boys she went tearing through the fields, following the dogs in pursuit of rabbits. Sometimes a young man came with the children from a near-by farm. Then she did not know what to do with herself. She wanted to walk demurely along the rows through the corn but was afraid her brothers would laugh and in desperation outdid the boys in roughness and noisiness. She screamed and shouted and running wildly tore her dress on the wire fences as she scrambled over in pursuit of the dogs. When a rabbit was caught and killed she rushed in and tore it out of the grasp of the dogs. The blood of the little dying animal dripped on her clothes. She swung it over her head and shouted.

The farm hand who had worked all summer in the field within sight of Elsie became enamoured of the young woman from town. When the groceryman's family appeared on Sunday mornings he also appeared but did not come to the house. When the boys and dogs came tearing through the fields he joined them. He was also self-conscious and did not want the boys to know the purpose of his coming and when he and Elizabeth found themselves alone together he became embarrassed. For a moment they walked together in silence. In a wide circle about them, in the forest of the

corn, ran the boys and dogs. The young man had something he wanted to say, but when he tried to find words his tongue became thick and his lips felt hot and dry. "Well," he began, "let's you and me—"

Words failed him and Elizabeth turned and ran after her brothers and for the rest of the day he could not manage to get her out of their sight. When he went to join them she became the noisiest member of the party. A frenzy of activity took possession of her. With hair hanging down her back, with clothes torn, and with cheeks and hands scratched and bleeding she led her brothers in the endless wild pursuit of the rabbits.

The Sunday in August that followed Elsie Leander's sleepless night was hot and cloudy. In the morning she was half ill and as soon as the visitors from town arrived she crept away to sit on the step at the side of the house. The children ran away into the fields. An almost overpowering desire to run with them, shouting and playing along the corn rows took possession of her. She arose and went to the back of the house. Her father was at work in the garden, pulling weeds from between rows of vegetables. Inside the house she could hear her sister-in-law moving about. On the front porch her brother Tom was asleep with his mother beside him. Elsie went back on the step and then arose and went to where the corn came down to the fence. She climbed awkwardly over and went a little way along one of the rows. Putting out her hand she touched the firm hard stalks and then, becoming afraid, dropped to her knees on the carpet of weeds that covered the ground. For a long time she stayed thus listening to the voices of the children in the distance.

An hour slipped away. Presently it was time for dinner and her sister-in-law came to the back door and shouted. There was an answering whoop from the distance and the children came running through the fields. They climbed over the fence and ran shouting across her father's garden. Elsie also arose. She was about to attempt to climb back over the fence unobserved when she heard a rustling in the corn. Young Elizabeth Leander appeared. Beside her walked the ploughman who but a few months earlier had planted the corn in the field where Elsie now stood.



She could see the two people coming slowly along the rows. An understanding had been established between them. The man reached through between the corn stalks and touched the hand of the girl who laughed awkwardly and running to the fence climbed quickly over. In her hand she held the limp body of a rabbit the dogs had killed.

The farm hand went away and when Elizabeth had gone into the house Elsie climbed over the fence. Her niece stood just within the kitchen door holding the dead rabbit by one leg. The other leg had been torn away by the dogs. At sight of the New England woman, who seemed to look at her with hard unsympathetic eyes, she was ashamed and went quickly into the house. She threw the rabbit upon a table in the parlour and then ran out of the room. Its blood ran out on the delicate flowers of a white crocheted table cover that had been made by Elsie's mother.

The Sunday dinner with all the living Leanders gathered about the table was gone through in a heavy lumbering silence. When the dinner was over and Tom and his wife had washed the dishes they went to sit with the older people on the front porch. Presently they were both asleep. Elsie returned to the step at the side of the house but when the desire to go again into the cornfields came sweeping over her she got up and went indoors.

The woman of thirty-five tip-toed about the big house like a frightened child. The dead rabbit that lay on the table in the parlour had become cold and stiff. Its blood had dried on the white table cover. She went upstairs but did not go to her own room. A spirit of adventure had hold of her. In the upper part of the house there were many rooms and in some of them no glass had been put into the windows. The windows had been boarded up and narrow streaks of light crept in through the cracks between the boards.

Elsie tip-toed up the flight of stairs past the room in which she slept and opening doors went into other rooms. Dust lay thick on the floors. In the silence she could hear her brother snoring as he slept in the chair on the front porch. From what seemed a far away place there came the shrill cries of the children. The cries became soft. They were like the cries of unborn children that had called to her out of the fields on the night before.

Into her mind came the intense silent figure of her mother sitting



on the porch beside her son and waiting for the day to wear itself out into night. The thought brought a lump into her throat. She wanted something and did not know what it was. Her own mood frightened her. In a windowless room at the back of the house one of the boards over a window had been broken and a bird had flown in and become imprisoned.

The presence of the woman frightened the bird. It flew wildly about. Its beating wings stirred up dust that danced in the air. Elsie stood perfectly still, also frightened, not by the presence of the bird but by the presence of life. Like the bird she was a prisoner. The thought gripped her. She wanted to go outdoors where her niece Elizabeth walked with the young ploughman through the corn, but was like the bird in the room—a prisoner. She moved restlessly about. The bird flew back and forth across the room. It alighted on the window sill near the place where the board was broken away. She stared into the frightened eyes of the bird that in turn stared into her eyes. Then the bird flew away, out through the window, and Elsie turned and ran nervously downstairs and out into the yard. She climbed over the wire fence and ran with stooped shoulders along one of the tunnels.

Elsie ran into the vastness of the cornfields filled with but one desire. She wanted to get out of her life and into some new and sweeter life she felt must be hidden away somewhere in the fields. After she had run a long way she came to a wire fence and crawled over. Her hair became unloosed and fell down over her shoulders. Her cheeks became flushed and for the moment she looked like a young girl. When she climbed over the fence she tore a great hole in the front of her dress. For a moment her tiny breasts were exposed and then her hand clutched and held nervously the sides of the tear. In the distance she could hear the voices of the boys and the barking of the dogs. A summer storm had been threatening for days and now black clouds had begun to spread themselves over the sky. As she ran nervously forward, stopping to listen and then running on again, the dry corn blades brushed against her shoulders and a fine shower of yellow dust from the corn tassels fell on her hair. A continued crackling noise accom-

panied her progress. The dust made a golden crown about her head. From the sky overhead a low rumbling sound, like the growling of giant dogs, came to her ears.

The thought that having at last ventured into the corn she would never escape became fixed in the mind of the running woman. Sharp pains shot through her body. Presently she was compelled to stop and sit on the ground. For a long time she sat with her closed eyes. Her dress became soiled. Little insects that live in the ground under the corn came out of their holes and crawled over her legs.

Following some obscure impulse the tired woman threw herself on her back and lay still with closed eyes. Her fright passed. It was warm and close in the room-like tunnels. The pain in her side went away. She opened her eyes and between the wide green corn blades could see patches of a black threatening sky. She did not want to be alarmed and so closed her eyes again. Her thin hand no longer gripped the tear in her dress and her tiny breasts were exposed. They expanded and contracted in little spasmodic jerks. She threw her hands back over her head and lay still.

It seemed to Elsie that hours passed as she lay thus, quiet and passive under the corn. Deep within her there was a feeling that something was about to happen, something that would lift her out of herself, that would tear her away from her past and the past of her people. Her thoughts were not definite. She lay still and waited as she had waited for days and months by the rock at the back of the orchard on the Vermont farm when she was a girl. A deep grumbling noise went on in the sky overhead but the sky and everything she had ever known seemed very far away, no part of herself.

After a long silence, when it seemed to her that she was lost from herself as in a dream, Elsie heard a man's voice calling. "Aho, aho, aho," shouted the voice and after another period of silence there arose answering voices and then the sound of bodies crashing through the corn and the excited chatter of children. A dog came running along the row where she lay and stood beside her. His cold nose touched her face and she sat up. The dog ran away. The Leander boys passed. She could see their bare legs flashing in and out across one of the tunnels. Her brother had become alarmed by the rapid approach of the thunder storm

and wanted to get his family to town. His voice kept calling from the house and the voices of the children answered from the fields.

Elsie sat on the ground with her hands pressed together. An odd feeling of disappointment had possession of her. She arose and walked slowly along in the general direction taken by the children. She came to a fence and crawled over, tearing her dress in a new place. One of her stockings had become unloosed and had slipped down over her shoe top. The long sharp weeds had scratched her leg so that it was criss-crossed with red lines, but she was not conscious of any pain.

The distraught woman followed the children until she came within sight of her father's house and then stopped and again sat on the ground. There was another loud crash of thunder and Tom Leander's voice called again, this time half angrily. The name of the girl Elizabeth was shouted in loud masculine tones that rolled and echoed like the thunder along the aisles under the corn.

And then Elizabeth came into sight accompanied by the young ploughman. They stopped near Elsie and the man took the girl into his arms. At the sound of their approach Elsie had thrown herself face downward on the ground and had twisted herself into a position where she could see without being seen. When their lips met her tense hands grasped one of the corn stalks. Her lips pressed themselves into the dust. When they had gone on their way she raised her head. A dusty powder covered her lips.

What seemed another long period of silence fell over the fields. A strong wind began to blow and the corn rocked back and forth. The murmuring voices of unborn children, her imagination had created in the whispering fields, became a vast shout. The wind blew harder and harder. The corn stalks were twisted and bent. Elizabeth went thoughtfully out of the field and climbing the fence confronted her father. "Where you been? What you been a doing?" he asked. "Don't you know we got to get out of here?"

When Elizabeth went toward the house Elsie followed, creeping on her hands and knees like a little animal, and when she had come within sight of the fence surrounding the house she sat on the ground and put her hands over her face. Something within herself was being twisted and whirled about as the tops of the

corn stalks were now being twisted and whirled by the wind. She sat so that she did not look toward the house and when she opened her eyes she could again see along the long mysterious aisles.

Her brother, with his wife and children, went away. By turning her head Elsie could see them driving at a trot out of the yard back of her father's house. With the going of the younger woman the farm house in the midst of the cornfield rocked by the winds seemed the most desolate place in the world.

Her mother came out at the back door of the house. She ran to the steps where she knew her daughter was in the habit of sitting and then in alarm began to call. It did not occur to Elsie to answer. The voice of the older woman did not seem to have anything to do with herself. It was a thin voice and was quickly lost in the wind and in the crashing sound that arose out of the fields. With her head turned toward the house Elsie stared at her mother who ran wildly around the house and then went indoors. The back door of the house went shut with a bang.

The storm that had been threatening broke with a roar. Broad sheets of water swept over the cornfields. Sheets of water swept over the woman's body. The storm that had for years been gathering in her also broke. Sobs arose out of her throat. She abandoned herself to a storm of grief that was only partially grief. Tears ran out of her eyes and made little furrows through the dust on her face. In the lulls that occasionally came in the storm she raised her head and heard, through the tangled mass of wet hair that covered her ears and above the sound of millions of raindrops that alighted on the earthen floor inside the house of the corn, the thin voices of her mother and father calling to her out of the Leander house.

## IN DEFENSE OF IMPERFECT VIRTUE

BY BENEDETTO CROCE

*Translated from the Italian by Arthur Livingston*

ONE would think from the frequency with which all of us have to claim indulgence for our share of human frailty that the rigorist in ethics would be a hard man to find; yet he is always popping up whichever way we turn. To the excessive annoyance of people of good sense and to the despair of candid trusting souls, he is forever on hand, ready, however loathe we are to follow his pointing finger, to turn up the corner of the tapestry we have been admiring and compel us to count the intricate roughnesses on the under-side. Here is a man whom you have ventured to praise as strong. Our rigorist will show how really weak he is. Here is an act you may have thought courageous—he will lay bare, one by one, the cowardly precedents leading up to it—expert in ferreting out selfishness where you have seen generosity, and meanness where you have found nobility and self-sacrifice. How often were we consoled during the late war with the forced reflection that war really has no heroes—that the soldier goes ahead because he does not dare run away; that he faces death because he is so crushed, physically, mentally, and morally, that life and death are alike indifferent to him; that not the sense of duty but personal vanity, lies at the bottom of his sublime achievement?

And the worst of it is that, for the most part, all the things the rigorist says are, taken one by one, unanswerable and true. But the peculiarity of such truth is, that instead of illuminating and giving courage and joy—the inevitable effect of any serious dictum of truth—it fills your mind with confusion and your soul with gloom, and you feel, somehow, that all you have been told is quite true, but, at the same time, utterly false.

Where, in fact, does the rigorist take us? Must we deny the reality of any good? But the human soul, in every one of its impulses, affirms that the good exists—on no other premise would it function at all. Is our cynic holding up such an exalted ideal

of virtue that it is never realized in human life? But, excuse me, an ideal unrealizable in human life, is no ideal at all—it is just plain humbug. Or is he depreciating the vile present to glorify a wonderful past, or, even, condemning present and past with reference to a radiant future we should strive toward? But the forces operative in the present have been and will be operative in past and future, and reality is always one. Isn't the situation, after all, more simple? The rigorist gets us nowhere, and what he says is certainly false.

Treating the rigorist with an indulgence and a justice he fails to use toward other people, we may overlook the psychological motivations, often base enough, of his censoriousness, and rest content with pointing out the fallacy that besets the rigorist's mind. The premise of all such criticism is that virtue is a perfect thing, and that, to be thus perfect, it must come into being instantaneously, and proceed, in a straight line, without hesitation, without backsliding, without compromise, pure in its initial stage, pure in the stage of its completion—one gets the picture of a gymnast executing a somersault backwards—to present itself to rigoristic analysis and receive the rigorist's diploma as something absolutely above reproach.

A beautiful conception of conduct indeed, unless you choose to call it about the ugliest imaginable! Beautiful as a mechanism, but ugly as a living organism; beautiful as an attraction, but ugly as a reality; beautiful, as something which does not exist, in the eyes of people who have such poor taste as to like non-existent things; but very ugly for people who demand, as the essential prerequisite of their admiring a thing, that the thing, to begin with, have being.

Life, as we all know, is not perfect—for the very reason that life is life, development, struggle, while only the non-living, the dead, that which is free from struggle, is perfect. What gives rise to any act of the will or to any tendency of character? Is it love for that vacuous abstraction which the rigorist calls moral perfection? Is it that imaginary leap out into the void? Or is conduct not, rather, an engraftment on the trunk of our personal impulses and passions, hot with the blood of life, and reeking with the grime of life, of the life of which conduct is not the negation, but a function and an expression? Only thus, indeed, does con-



duct arise, and therefore conduct is born of struggle, and struggle means hesitation, wavering, yielding, failure, defeat; all of which, again, mean struggle anew; so that from defeat we rise to repentance, we recover our grip on things, we progress, we reach a higher point than the level from which we fell, we fail again and we recover again, and again, and again, and again—in a constant effort towards the better.

And sometimes the enemy we are fighting, our selfishness, our self-seeking, is so strong we dare not meet it face to face—we compromise, we choose to fight on a somewhat lower level, setting one low impulse off against another, trying to weaken the impetuosity of the one with the violence of the other. More of us than are aware of it carry on struggles of just this kind. How many people do excellent things, really because they are looking for the advantages that come from public approval, or refrain from doing wrong because they are afraid of public condemnation, or because they think of those they love, or even because they pity the humiliation of the man they hate when he is forced to recognize their merit and their success! Why should we be surprised that the soldier seems to require dire punishments to insure his obedience, when even the man who is attracted to letters and art often finds his initial impulse failing and has recourse to expedients of constraints? Alfieri certainly had the "tragic fury" if anyone ever had. Well, his own work often bored him so that he would cut his hair off short, so that he would not dare go out of doors; and at other times he had himself tied into his chair. Such, surely, are compromises, ennobled of course by the end they hold in view, and directly opposite to the "directions of intent"—the lines of least resistance—of Jesuitical ethics; for whereas the Jesuitical compromise adapts ideals to personal impulses and aspirations, these other compromises try to use the lower motivation in the service of the ideal.

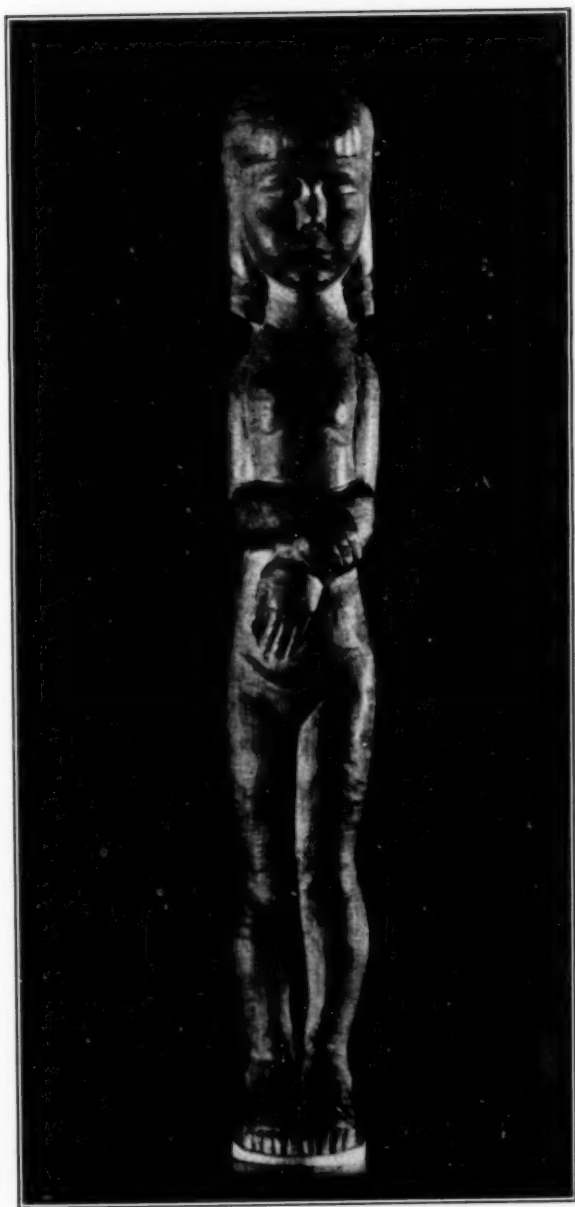
Compromise—which is the wormwood in the bitter cup—operates in the moral life as the temporary expedient. It is the drug in the crisis of fever, the bridge over the unfordable torrent. And ethical training strives to strengthen and consolidate the power of the will, to endow it with a capacity, a virtue, which will make the need of compromise less frequent, and transform the compromise, which is an alliance between the high and the low in a man,



into a predominance of the higher over the lower. And when a man has accomplished that transformation, we call him a good man, an upright man, a hero, a saint.

But he is such only in the eyes of the world, in the eyes of other people, for all heroism, all saintliness, all virtue, has a deal of legend attached to it. In his own conscience the hero does not see himself as heroic, nor the saint as saintly, nor the good man as upright. Where other people do not observe defects, he is perfectly aware of them; where other people are not conscious of impurity, he feels and is ashamed of it; where other people notice only courage, he remembers cowardliness and shrinkings. And that is why the saint has scruples and remorse, why the good man is humble and charitable, and the hero is modest and unassuming.

When we say "other people," here, we of course mean people of good sense, people of candour and trustfulness; for the ethical rigorists never see any of the saint's saintliness, nor of the hero's heroism; their eyes are forever fixed on the defect, on the weakness, on the impurity; and in this they think they are very shrewd, when in reality they are very obtuse, if obtuseness consist in losing sight of the action in the maze of its incidents, of the big in the little, of the creative drama of humanity in the hesitations, the waverings, the set-backs, which attend every creative effort of the race. They look at things that way because they have a moral ideal in mind which would serve admirably as a jack-in-the-box of pure and perfect virtue—a splendid mechanism of elastic steel; but we, who like men with spines made not of steel but of bone and marrow, look up, instead, to another virtue, the only virtue that is real, the only virtue that is virtue—the virtue, in other words, that is imperfect.



A WOOD CARVING. BY WILLIAM ZORACH



## AMERICANS

BY LAWRENCE VAIL

Americans  
Of shaven handsome visage,  
Of pompous cautious eloquence,  
Forget your jaws,  
Your safety razors,  
The morning's business puzzle.  
Bite foolish wind,  
Nurse fairy blisters,  
Cough doom and roman candles.  
Take her,  
Your rich expensive Dorothy  
Not to the tabernacle,  
Nor to the Midnight Giddies;  
Wield all of her:  
Petticoats, chaste legs, stilted soul  
Across your knees  
And spank her—humorously.  
Tell her that virgins should not aggravate  
By hiding beneath dignity and silks  
Fair blood and gentle bosom.  
Proud American womanhood should smart  
To furnish wild sweet wenches.  
Firmly, strip her of poise and underwear,  
Ply oft and hard your manly palm  
Against her soft pink places;  
Thus break to-morrow's haughty neck  
On yesterday's glum altar.

## DUST FOR SPARROWS

BY REMY DE GOURMONT

*Translated by Ezra Pound*

130

Earthly justice can't be much good among people who have accepted as divine justice a system wherein the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, and for whom a scoundrel respecting their dogmas and following their rites is of more worth than a saint who hasn't the luck to be a believer.

131

The church has had this profound idea, namely that crime does not exclude redemption nor even sanctity.

132

Upon the day of aridity, shadow, and sadness, perhaps an ember of love conserved beneath so many ashes, will set the world on fire, and cause life, purified by grief, to be reborn warmer and more agreeable than ever.

133

One of the most decided partisans of the death penalty I have ever met confessed to me one day that he had insisted on his mistress having three abortions, and that she had died of the complications ensuing upon the third intervention. He sighed, adding, "Poor little thing, I was very fond of her."

134

The only cheap and quick justice is that one can do oneself, without, of course, lèse-society.

135

At the marriage of a French prince and a Spanish infanta, one

of the items of the celebration was to have been a grilling of Jews and of people who had fallen back into heresy. It was only omitted at the request of the French ambassador; they had to be content with a bull-fight.

## 136

The ferocity which marks the Spanish fanatic is not European; it is Asiatic and African and must have been brought in by the Moors and converted Jews.

## 137.

There is no doubt that there should be a difference between the spirit of justice and its legal application; as for example when this serves to open public life to a family reduced to misery.

## 138

Superstition is rather more human than religion, because it has no morality.

## 139

There is a science; there is especially an art which cannot read.

## 140

Torquemada is the best demonstration of the affinity between the temperaments of fanatic and assassin.

## 141

It is easy to understand that those who have had a childhood unhappy and full of mortifications and injustices have even to an advanced age a soul melancholy and yet avid of pleasures.

## 142

The social life in superior civilizations is too harsh, too arid, too sad to be bearable without the aid of excitements. Wine is the best of these stimulants, being agreeable, noble, and having the sanction of antiquity.

143

All vices are of interior origin. Cards do not make the gambler nor a bottle the drunkard.

144

If one deprived humanity of the pleasures of good wine, life would be rather like catholicism without *fiestas* and without art.

145

If gambling to amuse oneself or drinking a few glasses of wine were enough to turn a normal man into a drunkard or a gambler, who in this world would be without these two vices?

146

To-day as in Horace' time good wine continues to be the consolation of life, and the sole means of evoking, for an instant, happy hours, or the fevers of love, when youth is no more but a memory.

147

Bernard Palissy said that all birth pangs are painful, especially those of intelligence. Nevertheless, the creative fever gives transports of enthusiasm and divine inebriations.

148

The art which cannot, in a verse, a phrase, a melody, a brush-stroke evoke all of an instant of life may be a goldsmith's product, it is not, at any rate, art.

149

The Napoleonic epopee was really a resurrection of Julius Caesar; transferred from Rome to Paris and having Gauls to carry his triumphant eagles . . . to the borders of Europe. The war of 1870 was the return of the barbarians. Will we see Caesar resuscitated or will the Latin eagles remain for ever vanquished by the other proud eagles?



## 150

Various of the books ridiculed by Cervantes in *Don Quixote* were used by Wagner in writing his musical poems. This shows that one may have plastic genius and the highest sense of the comic without possessing an atom of poetry.

## 151

The Italians are the cleverest interpreters of the grand passions. They are perhaps the only people who can play Shakespeare. But he who can do the greater cannot do the less, although Novelli has almost proved the contrary. One must not put a race horse in carriage shafts or demand pirouettes of an elephant.

## 152

The sanguinary vehemence of the southerner is not in most cases the outburst of a brutal temperament. May it not be a great love of justice, a great cult of friendship which makes him drive a knife into the heart of a companion who is dishonest in business, cheater at cards, or disloyal in affections?

## 153

A sacred orator has told us that one of the greatest proofs of the infinitude of God's kindness is that he has put poison in the serpent's mouth and not on the lips of woman.

## 154

If women suspected the amenities mental and even spoken which men address to them in the impatience of the delay?

## 155

One sole thing distinguishes mankind from the animals, making man the most ferocious of all, especially against his own species: it is fanaticism.

## 156

Many people, moreover intelligent ones, care far more for what men say than for what they do.

157

Charity as practised in Christian countries is good in itself and even indispensable, but rests in final analysis the charity of a master who, having over-driven his slaves all their lives, sends them to hospital when they are ill or to an asylum when old age has made them impotent.

158

Hearts corrodible by human tears are condemned to all the defeats, for true tears are abundant and false tears are a deluge. Beware of imitations.

159

At passing into adolescence, brought up as they have been in accordance to a strict moral code which exalts purity of sentiments, children generally suffer and are indignant at seeing not the inconsequence of strangers but of their own parents. It must be a fairly bad world where the fathers find themselves obliged to teach their children a moral code which they despise; inculcating conditions which, after their entry into life, the children will respect no more than they themselves do.

160

The right to revolution, legitimate though it may be, like that of legitimate defence, has been greatly discredited by having been so much abused.

161

Evidently the English suffragettes are in a bad way. Love is really the goal of all human struggles; if women had penetrated this verity they might easily have had all the world's government in their hands.

*To be continued*

## REX

BY D. H. LAWRENCE

**S**INCE every family has its black sheep, it almost follows that every man must have a sooty uncle. Lucky if he hasn't two. However, it is only with my mother's brother that we are concerned. She had loved him dearly when he was a little blond boy. When he grew up black, she was always vowing she would never speak to him again. Yet when he put in an appearance, after years of absence, she invariably received him in a festive mood, and was even flirty with him.

He rolled up one day in a dog-cart, when I was a small boy. He was large and bullet-headed and blustering, and this time, sporty. Sometimes he was rather literary, sometimes coloured with business. But this time he was in checks, and was sporty. We viewed him from a distance.

The upshot was, would we rear a pup for him. Now my mother detested animals about the house. She could not bear the mix-up of human with animal life. Yet she consented to bring up the pup.

My uncle had taken a large, vulgar public-house in a large and vulgar town. It came to pass that I must fetch the pup. Strange for me, a member of the Band of Hope, to enter the big, noisy, smelly plate-glass and mahogany public-house. It was called The Good Omen. Strange to have my uncle towering over me in the passage, shouting "Hello Johnny, what d'yer want?" He didn't know me. Strange to think he was my mother's brother, and that he had his bouts when he read Browning aloud with emotion and *éclat*.

I was given tea in a narrow, uncomfortable sort of living-room, half kitchen. Curious that such a palatial pub should show such miserable private accommodations, but so it was. There was I, unhappy, and glad to escape with the soft fat pup. It was winter-time, and I wore a big-flapped black overcoat, half cloak. Under the cloak-sleeves I hid the puppy, who trembled. It was Saturday, and the train was crowded, and he whimpered under my coat. I sat in mortal fear of being hauled out for travelling without a dog-

ticket. However, we arrived, and my torments were for nothing.

The others were wildly excited over the puppy. He was small and fat and white, with a brown-and-black head: a fox terrier. My father said he had a lemon head—some such mysterious technical phraseology. It wasn't lemon at all, but coloured like a field bee. And he had a black spot at the root of his spine.

It was Saturday night—bath-night. He crawled on the hearth-rug like a fat white tea-cup, and licked the bare toes that had just been bathed.

"He ought to be called Spot," said one. But that was too ordinary. It was a great question, what to call him.

"Call him Rex—the King," said my mother, looking down on the fat, animated little tea-cup, who was chewing my sister's little toe and making her squeal with joy and tickles. We took the name in all seriousness.

"Rex—the King!" We thought it was just right. Not for years did I realize that it was a sarcasm on my mother's part. She must have wasted some twenty years or more of irony, on our incurable naïveté.

It wasn't a successful name, really. Because my father, and all the people in the street failed completely to pronounce the monosyllable Rex. They all said Rax. And it always distressed me. It always suggested to me seaweed, and rack-and-ruin. Poor Rex!

We loved him dearly. The first night we woke to hear him weeping and whinneying in loneliness at the foot of the stairs. When it could be borne no more, I slipped down for him, and he slept under the sheets.

"I won't have that little beast in the beds. Beds are not for dogs," declared my mother callously.

"He's as good as we are!" we cried, injured.

"Whether he is or not, he's not going in the beds."

I think now, my mother scorned us for our lack of pride. We were a little *infra dig.*, we children.

The second night, however, Rex wept the same and in the same way was comforted. The third night we heard our father plod downstairs, heard several slaps administered to the yelping, dismayed puppy, and heard the amiable, but to us heartless voice saying "Shut it then! Shut thy noise, 'st hear? Stop in thy basket, stop there!"

"It's a shame!" we shouted, in muffled rebellion, from the sheets.

"I'll give you shame, if you don't hold your noise and go to sleep," called our mother from her room. Whereupon we shed angry tears and went to sleep. But there was a tension.

"Such a houseful of idiots would make me detest the little beast, even if he was better than he is," said my mother.

But as a matter of fact, she did not detest Rexie at all. She only had to pretend to do so, to balance our adoration. And in truth, she did not care for close contact with animals. She was too fastidious. My father, however, would take on a real dog's voice, talking to the puppy: a funny, high, sing-song falsetto which he seemed to produce at the top of his head. "'S a pretty little dog! 's a pretty little doggy!—ay!—yes!—he is, yes!—Wag thy strunt, then! Wag thy strunt, Raxie!—Ha-ha! Nay, tha munna—" This last as the puppy, wild with excitement at the strange falsetto voice, licked my father's nostrils and bit my father's nose with his sharp little teeth.

"'E makes blood come," said my father.

"Serves you right for being so silly with him," said my mother. It was odd to see her as she watched the man, my father, crouching and talking to the little dog and laughing strangely when the little creature bit his nose and toused his beard. What does a woman think of her husband at such a moment?

My mother amused herself over the names we called him.

"He's an angel—he's a little butterfly—Rexie, my sweet!"

"Sweet! A dirty little object!" interpolated my mother. She and he had a feud from the first. Of course he chewed boots and worried our stockings and swallowed our garters. The moment we took off our stockings he would dart away with one, we after him. Then as he hung, growling vociferously, at one end of the stocking, we at the other, we would cry:

"Look at him, mother! He'll make holes in it again." Whereupon my mother darted at him and spanked him sharply.

"Let go, Sir, you destructive little fiend."

But he didn't let go. He began to growl with real rage, and hung on viciously. Mite as he was, he defied her with a manly fury. He did not hate her, nor she him. But they had one long battle with one another.

"I'll teach you, my Jockey! Do you think I'm going to spend my life darning after your destructive little teeth! I'll show you if I will!"

But Rexie only growled more viciously. They both became really angry, whilst we children expostulated earnestly with both. He would not let her take the stocking from him.

"You should tell him properly, mother. He won't be driven," we said.

"I'll drive him further than he bargains for. I'll drive him out of my sight for ever, that I will," declared my mother, truly angry. He would put her into a real temper, with his tiny, growling defiance.

"He's sweet! A Rexie, a little Rexie!"

"A filthy little nuisance! Don't think I'll put up with him."

And to tell the truth, he was dirty at first. How could he be otherwise, so young! But my mother hated him for it. And perhaps this was the real start of their hostility. For he lived in the house with us. He would wrinkle his nose and show his tiny dagger-teeth in fury when he was thwarted, and his growls of real battle-rage against my mother rejoiced us as much as they angered her. But at last she caught him *in flagrante*. She pounced on him, rubbed his nose in the mess, and flung him out into the yard. He yelped with shame and disgust and indignation. I shall never forget the sight of him as he rolled over, then tried to turn his head away from the disgust of his own muzzle, shaking his little snout with a sort of horror, and trying to sneeze it off. My sister gave a yell of despair, and dashed out with a rag and a pan of water, weeping wildly. She sat in the middle of the yard with the befouled puppy, and shedding bitter tears she wiped him and washed him clean. Loudly she reproached my mother. "Look how much bigger you are than he is. It's a shame, it's a shame!"

"You ridiculous little lunatic, you've undone all the good it would do him, with your soft ways. Why is my life made a curse with animals! Haven't I enough as it is—"

There was a subdued tension afterwards. Rex was a little white chasm between us and our parent.

He became clean. But then another tragedy loomed. He must be docked. His floating puppy-tail must be docked short. This time my father was the enemy. My mother agreed with us that it was an unnecessary cruelty. But my father was adamant. "The dog 'll look a fool all his life, if he's not docked." And there was no getting away from it. To add to the horror, poor Rex's tail



must be *bitten* off. Why bitten? we asked aghast. We were assured that biting was the only way. A man would take the little tail and just nip it through with his teeth, at a certain joint. My father lifted his lips and bared his incisors, to suit the description. We shuddered. But we were in the hands of fate.

Rex was carried away, and a man called Rowbotham bit off the superfluity of his tail in the Nags Head, for a quart of best and bitter. We lamented our poor diminished puppy, but agreed to find him more manly and *comme il faut*. We should always have been ashamed of his little whip of a tail, if it had not been shortened. My father said it had made a man of him.

Perhaps it had. For now his true nature came out. And his true nature, like so much else, was dual. First he was a fierce, canine little beast, a beast of rapine and blood. He longed to hunt, savagely. He lusted to set his teeth in his prey. It was no joke with him. The old canine Adam stood first in him, the dog with fangs and glaring eyes. He flew at us when we annoyed him. He flew at all intruders, particularly the postman. He was almost a peril to the neighbourhood. But not quite. Because close second in his nature stood that fatal need to love, the *besoin d'aimer* which at last makes an end of liberty. He had a terrible, terrible necessity to love, and this trammelled the native, savage hunting beast which he was. He was torn between two great impulses: the native impulse to hunt and kill, and the strange, secondary, supervening impulse to love and obey. If he had been left to my father and mother, he would have run wild and got himself shot. As it was, he loved us children with a fierce, joyous love. And we loved him.

When we came home from school we would see him standing at the end of the entry, cocking his head wistfully at the open country in front of him, and meditating whether to be off or not: a white, inquiring little figure, with green savage freedom in front of him. A cry from a far distance from one of us, and like a bullet he hurled himself down the road, in a mad game. Seeing him coming, my sister invariably turned and fled, shrieking with delighted terror. And he would leap straight up her back, and bite her and tear her clothes. But it was only an ecstasy of savage love, and she knew it. She didn't care if he tore her pinafores. But my mother did.

My mother was maddened by him. He was a little demon. At the least provocation, he flew. You had only to sweep the floor,



and he bristled and sprang at the broom. Nor would he let go. With his scruff erect and his nostrils snorting rage, he would turn up the whites of his eyes at my mother, as she wrestled at the other end of the broom. "Leave go, Sir, leave go!" She wrestled and stamped her foot, and he answered with horrid growls. In the end it was she who had to let go. Then she flew at him, and he flew at her. All the time we had him, he was within a hair's-breadth of savagely biting her. And she knew it. Yet he always kept sufficient self-control.

We children loved his temper. We would drag the bones from his mouth, and put him into such paroxysms of rage that he would twist his head right over and lay it on the ground upside-down, because he didn't know what to do with himself, the savage was so strong in him and he must fly at us. "He'll fly at your throat one of these days," said my father. Neither he nor my mother dared have touched Rex's bone. It was enough to see him bristle and roll the whites of his eyes when they came near. How near he must have been to driving his teeth right into us, cannot be told. He was a horrid sight snarling and crouching at us. But we only laughed and rebuked him. And he would whimper in the sheer torment of his need to attack us.

He never did hurt us. He never hurt anybody, though the neighbourhood was terrified of him. But he took to hunting. To my mother's disgust, he would bring large dead bleeding rats and lay them on the hearth-rug, and she had to take them up on a shovel. For he would not remove them. Occasionally he brought a mangled rabbit, and sometimes, alas, fragmentary poultry. We were in terror of prosecution. Once he came home bloody and feathery and rather sheepish-looking. We cleaned him and questioned him and abused him. Next day we heard of six dead ducks. Thank heaven no one had seen him.

But he was disobedient. If he saw a hen he was off, and calling would not bring him back. He was worst of all with my father, who would take him walks on Sunday morning. My mother would not walk a yard with him. Once, walking with my father, he rushed off at some sheep in a field. My father yelled in vain. The dog was at the sheep, and meant business. My father crawled through the hedge, and was upon him in time. And now the man was in a paroxysm of rage. He dragged the little beast into the road and thrashed him with a walking stick.

"Do you know you're thrashing that dog unmercifully?" said a passer-by.

"Ay, an' mean to," shouted my father.

The curious thing was that Rex did not respect my father any the more, for the beatings he had from him. He took much more heed of us children, always.

But he let us down also. One fatal Saturday he disappeared. We hunted and called, but no Rex. We were bathed, and it was bed-time, but we would not go to bed. Instead we sat in a row in our night-dresses on the sofa, and wept without stopping. This drove our mother mad.

"Am I going to put up with it? Am I? And all for that hateful little beast of a dog! He shall go! If he's not gone now, he shall go."

Our father came in late, looking rather queer, with his hat over his eye. But in his staccato tippled fashion he tried to be consoling.

"Never mind, my duckie, I s'll look for him in the morning."

Sunday came—Oh, such a Sunday. We cried, and didn't eat. We scoured the land, and for the first time realized how empty and wide the earth is, when you're looking for something. My father walked for many miles—all in vain. Sunday dinner, with rhubarb pudding, I remember, and an atmosphere of abject misery that was unbearable.

"Never," said my mother, "never shall an animal set foot in this house again, while I live. I knew what it would be! I knew."

The day wore on, and it was the black gloom of bed-time, when we heard a scratch and an impudent little whine at the door. In trotted Rex, mud-black, disreputable, and impudent. His air of off-hand "how d'ye do!" was indescribable. He trotted round with *suffisance*, wagging his tail as if to say "Yes, I've come back. But I didn't need to. I can carry on remarkably well by myself." Then he walked to his water, and drank noisily and ostentatiously. It was rather a slap in the eye for us.

He disappeared once or twice in this fashion. We never knew where he went. And we began to feel that his heart was not so golden as we had imagined it.

But one fatal day re-appeared my uncle and the dog-cart. He whistled to Rex, and Rex trotted up. But when he wanted to examine the lusty, sturdy dog, Rex became suddenly still, then sprang free. Quite jauntily he trotted round—but out of reach of

my uncle. He leaped up, licking our faces, and trying to make us play.

"Why what ha' you done wi' the dog—You've made a fool of him. He's softer than grease. You've ruined him. You've made a damned fool of him," shouted my uncle.

Rex was captured and hauled off to the dog-cart and tied to the seat. He was in a frenzy. He yelped and shrieked and struggled, and was hit on the head, hard, with the butt-end of my uncle's whip, which only made him struggle more frantically. So we saw him driven away, our beloved Rex, frantically, madly fighting to get to us from the high dog-cart, and being knocked down, whilst we stood in the street in mute despair.

After which, black tears, and a little wound which is still alive in our hearts.

I saw Rex only once again, when I had to call just once at The Good Omen. He must have heard my voice, for he was upon me in the passage before I knew where I was. And in the instant I knew how he loved us. He really loved us. And in the same instant there was my uncle with a whip, beating and kicking him back, and Rex cowering, bristling, snarling.

My uncle swore many oaths, how we had ruined the dog for ever, made him vicious, spoiled him for showing purposes, and been altogether a pack of mard-soft fools not fit to be trusted with any dog but a gutter-mongrel.

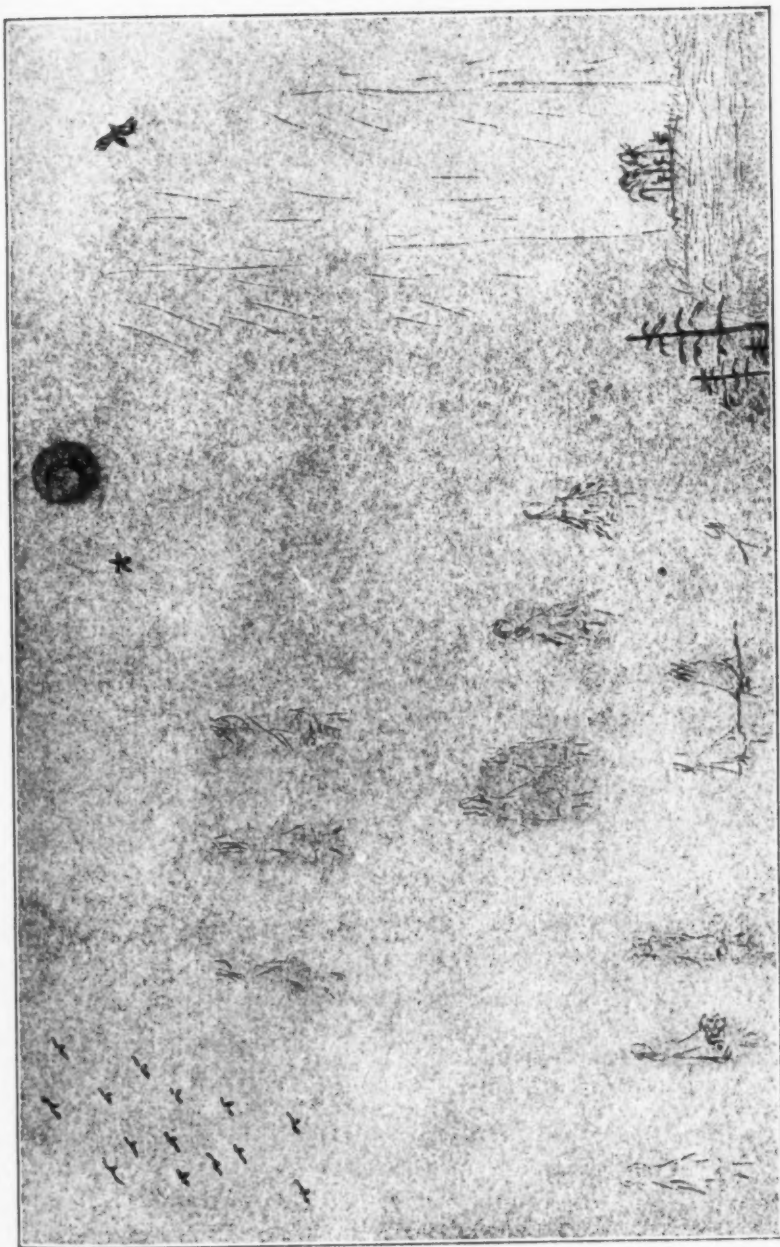
Poor Rex! We heard his temper was incurably vicious, and he had to be shot.

And it was our fault. We had loved him too much, and he had loved us too much. We never had another pet.

It is a strange thing, love. Nothing but love has made the dog lose his wild freedom, to become the servant of man. And this very servility or completeness of love makes him a term of deepest contempt.—"You dog!"

We should not have loved Rex so much, and he should not have loved us. There should have been a measure. We tended, all of us, to overstep the limits of our own natures. He should have stayed outside human limits, we should have stayed outside canine limits. Nothing is more fatal than the disaster of too much love. My uncle was right, we had ruined the dog.

My uncle was a fool, for all that.



A DRAWING. BY ELIZABETH NAGEL



## MAX BEERBOHM

BY BOHUN LYNCH

### I

**I**T is in the unchanging things that we find our greatest pleasure, and though by imperceptible degrees the apple-tree grows sturdier, its blossom each year remains the same. If as a young tree, it put forth tiger-lilies, we should certainly say that it was very affected and precocious and we would hope that the under-gardener would cut it down—the nasty unnatural thing. Unfortunately, however, such is the peculiarity of our vision that we are frequently prone to mistake any fine but very early blossoming for, so to put it, tiger-lilies; and the under-gardener gets to work and sees what he can do about it. The head-gardener, on the other hand, if he understands his job, bides his time and waits for the next year to see whether after all it is real apple blossom or not. He will then, if he has kept his under-strapper in hand, perceive that what had almost deceived his sharp eyes was only a particularly fine variety of blossom; and he will be glad: and many years later when, the fine blossom being still as fine, the tree has grown sturdy and mature, he will be very glad and will rub his hands. “But for me . . .” he will say.

So, despite an imperfect and somewhat laboured analogy, it has been with Mr Max Beerbohm and the critics. He began to write as an undergraduate at Merton and his writing was so surprisingly good that the critics, unaccustomed as we are now to subscribing the literary reputations of an hundred nurseries, looked askance. Some jeered, some put on cap and gown and swished the birch, and some, understanding their job, remembered that letters were letters and that the age of the writer, though interesting, should not be used either for palliation or impeachment.

In his attitude to the critics appears almost the only trace of bitterness that Mr Beerbohm has ever shown—the only thorn the apple-tree ever put forth. “It is a pity,” he says in his Letter to the Editor, printed in Volume II of the Yellow Book, answering the



serious abuse poured upon his *Defense of Cosmetics* in Volume I, "It is a pity that critics should show so little sympathy with writers, and curious when we consider that most of them tried to be writers themselves, once." That last venomous comma is worth a page of invective and is entirely characteristic. However, that was only at the beginning: the critics have all become wise head-gardeners, and have recognized the high truth that whilst much blossom predicates fruit, it is for its own beautiful sake worthy of intense admiration. We, who never forget the prime importance of being earnest, look about us now and again for refreshment, for something upon which we can absolutely rely not to bother us with piety or pity, with serious issues, with the true reflection of our own sombre habit of mind and we think of *Treasure Island* and *The Ghost Stories* of an Antiquary and other books which can ordinarily be relied upon for amusement and we reject them (sometimes) because we require that which besides not being useful is, positively and especially, ornamental: and we happily call to mind one of Mr Beerbohm's cartoons, in which he represents the Shade of Stevenson looking at the modern novelists standing upon their upturned tubs, saying to Mr Gosse, "You have shown me the propagandists and the pamphleteers and grinders of axes (or words of that meaning), now will you show me some of the *writers*?" That was a very valuable piece of criticism, widely if not universally deserved. And in writing stories for those stories' sakes, essays to amuse, and not to edify, and in never preaching, he has practised what he implicitly laid down as a golden rule.

There are two outstanding features of Mr Beerbohm's literary work, which, with a little necessary difference of expression, apply also to his caricatures. These are his style and a certain daintiness of imagination. His sense of humour can hardly be separated from his style: the two must be regarded as inextricable. Some men write amusingly of common things, some write amusingly of amusing things, some write of amusing things unamusingly—that is to say, in the last predicament, though the author may succeed in making you laugh at the humour of his subject, it is the subject and not the author which is the immediate—and only—cause of your giggling. Mr Beerbohm has written—though not often—of subjects which would be generally amusing and he has drawn a great deal of latent fun out of most common things: but the fun which from



first to last has never, upon any occasion, been of the bucolic or uproarious kind, has been so intermingled with his style of writing that each almost invariably includes the other. The way he has said it has generally improved very notably upon what he has said.

"For my own part," he says in his essay on Ouida, "I am a dilettante, a *petit maître*, I love best in literature delicate and elaborate ingenuities of form and style."

It is this very delicacy both in the manner and matter of his own writings which distinguishes him. His aim is clearly to amuse himself and us—in that order. He has always written in the first person, more than once he has made his characters speak of him by name, he has given his views upon things in general with a happy and conscious affectation of vanity which led reviewers of the past to talk of his "delicate impertinences," which, having a regard for the meaning of words, they were not. The only description which really fits is "sheer delicious damned cheek."

"To give an accurate and exhaustive account of that period," he writes of the year 1880, "would need a far less brilliant pen than mine . . . and I look to Professor Gardiner and to the Bishop of Oxford." And those of us who were once made to slumber with our elbows upon Dr Stubbs' History will bear him out.

Deliberately to sit down and try to sift separate sentences of a particular author for nuggets seems, on the face of it, an excruciatingly funny procedure: and yet the biggest nuggets will paradoxically be caught by the finest sieve. It is by little tricks of style that Mr Beerbohm gets his effects.

In one of his earliest essays, reprinted in *The Works*, upon Dandies and Dandies, he tells us that Brummell left Oriel for a commission in the Tenth Hussars, "Crack though the regiment was . . . young Mr Brummell could not bear to see all his brother officers in clothes exactly like his own." The separation of the epithet from the noun it usually goes with arm in arm is very typical of Mr Beerbohm's humour. Anybody could and generally would say "though it was a crack regiment." Wit in style is often but the quick snatching at unlikely straws, and Mr Beerbohm has often made us split our sides by splitting hairs. There was much in Mr Beerbohm's early work which, though it provoked and does still provoke, pleasure, can safely be put down to the perversity of youth. He invented words: he wrote "innowise" and "inver-

ideed," he exhorted us—"Perpend!" But, to fall back for the last time upon the apple-tree analogy, the blossom remains, only the trunk has become sturdier, the growth has been steady and imperceptible, but Max Beerbohm is still—Max Beerbohm. His individual sense of the unfitness of things, his "mischievous and spritely wit," as it obviously must have been called on many occasions, was exemplified in his essay, *Servants*, published in the March number of *The London Mercury*, where he writes of the pond by Jack Straw's Castle "at all seasons so much barked around by excitable dogs." In that sentence lies the chief secret of Mr Beerbohm's style—an ultimate refinement of splendid silliness. Other instances of the same sort of thing tumble over one another out of memory. Again to quote from the Letter to the Editor of the *Yellow Book*, when he complains of his treatment at the hands of the reviewers—"If I had only signed myself D. Cadent or Parrar Docks . . . all the pressmen would have said that I had given them a very delicate bit of satire. But I did not, and *hinc*, as they themselves love to say, *illae lacrimae*." That's all—just the cleavage of that tag—but there is no one else who would have thought of it, even at two and twenty. The amusing abuse of qualification is seen in two diverse services to which he puts the word rather. "The labour I set myself," he says in his "history" of the year 1880, "is rather Herculean." "I am quite unable to cope with burglars,"—he is complaining in an essay on Punch that after Keene's pictures of burglars in knee-breeches and masks, he cannot persuade himself that a burglar is really but an ordinary individual in trousers—"so they come rather often."

And in *More* there is one essay which defies the snipper of short quotations, but which provides instances of almost all these elusive gestures under present and laborious scrutiny. It is *The Case of Prometheus*—who, to Mr Beerbohm (judging from the paper read before the Royal Geographical Society by Mr Richard Mitchell) is still *vincetus* upon the summit of Mount Caucasus.

## II

So much for what Mr Beerbohm himself might accuse Mr Frank Harris of calling style-humour, to which it will be necessary to return. The other salient characteristic, we have said, is a certain daintiness which is also wedded to the style; but which can be separated from it because it is almost always seen in Mr Beerbohm's chosen subjects. And of these, his first love to which, as all good lovers should, he returns again and again, is costume—clothes themselves and anecdotes about clothes. In *Dandies and Dandies*, (reprinted in *The Works*, 1896) he says:

"For some years I had felt convinced that in a perfect dandy this affinity must reach a point, when the costume itself, planned with the finest sensibility, would change with the emotional changes of its wearer, automatically. . . ."

One day, he tells us, he went into a club of which a member was Lord X who had been plunging up to the hilt on the day's running.

"His lordship was there, fingering feverishly the sinuous riband of the tape-machine. I sat at a little distance, watching him. Two results straggled forth within an hour, and, at the second of these, I saw with wonder Lord X's linen actually flush for a moment, and then turn deadly pale. I looked again and saw that his boots had lost their lustre. Drawing nearer I found that grey hairs had begun to show themselves in his raven coat. It was very painful and yet, to me, very gratifying. In the cloak-room, when I went for my own hat and cane, there was the hat with the broad brim (Lord X's) and (lo!) over its iron-blue surface little furrows had been ploughed by Despair."

Fifteen years or so later we find him changing, in the Duke of Dorset's shirt, two white pearls respectively to black and pink, because of his sudden love for Zuleika Dobson. His fidelity to clothes is remarkable.— Besides the essay set apart for that subject there are constant references elsewhere—in *King George the Fourth*, *Poor Romeo*—where we find an antiquarian inquisitiveness into the history of a forgotten dandy. Madame Tussaud's, as well

as in the stories—Zuleika Dobson, The Happy Hypocrite, and Enoch Soames (the first of Seven Men), and especially in the caricatures of all periods. The same vanity (or affectation of it) is to be seen in the frequency with which he has introduced his own exquisitely-dressed figure in caricatures with one or more people whose clothes were not remarkable for elegance. Of these the best is the "sudden appearance of Mr Max Beerbohm in the New English Art Club" where various individual members, shaggy and tousled, stare in consternation and point uncouth fingers at the intruder. Indeed repetition, by no means in the adverse sense, is to be found whenever the reader takes a comprehensive view of his work from 1894 to the present day. In a manner of speaking, the story of Enoch Soames does incidentally for the 'nineties, more by allusion than by statement direct, very much what the essay 1880 sets out to do for that year.

One of the most telling qualities in a good style, a quality especially remarkable in Stevenson's work, is that of giving the reader a little happy mild surprise by the correct but unusual use of ordinary words. The Mashers who "were often admirable upon the steps of clubs" provide a case in point.

The essay about An Infamous Brigade (More, 1899) doubly illustrates the author's attitude. He had seen a fire in the distance and had driven towards it.

"Persons in absurd helmets ran about pouring cascades of cold water on the flames. These, my cabman told me, were firemen. I jumped out and, catching one of them by the arm, bade him sharply desist from his vandalism. I told him that I had driven miles to see this fire, that great crowds of Londoners, poor people with few joys, were there to see it also, and I asked him who was he that he should dare to disappoint us. Without answering my arguments, he warned me that I must not interfere with him 'in the discharge of his duty.' The silly crowd would not uphold me, and I fell back, surreptitiously slitting his water-hose with a pen-knife."

That, with all deference, is somewhat eighteen-ninetyish and young at that, delightful though it may be. But on the opposite page comes a genuine triumph of restraint which might have been

expected of a much maturer writer. He is speaking of the magnificent fires they have in Chicago, "and indeed it must be splendid to see those twenty-three story buildings come crashing down in less time than was required to build them up." How many people would not have pointed to the joke by saying "even in less time."

"I love best in literature delicate and elaborate ingenuities in form and style"; and that love is patent throughout his work. More is dedicated: "To Mlle de la Ramée with the author's compliments and to Ouida with his love." Was ever homage more gracefully paid?

Isolated sentences, illustrating that daintiness, that delicacy in style, each giving its peculiar little thrill of pleasure, return to the mind from time to time:—Of Queen Caroline—"Fate wrote her a most tremendous tragedy, and she played it in tights"; of George IV—"we know he was fond of quoting those incomparable poets, Homer." "Ere long it may be that tender parents will be writing to complain of the compulsory baccarat in our public schools"; of jokes in the usual comic paper—"whether such jests require, or are in any way strengthened by a picture of a décolletée girl sitting in the shadow of a standard lamp, with a bald man bending over the back of her chair, is a question on which I have already made up my mind"; of signboards and the "dressing" of shop windows—"why should the sea give up its dead to fishmongers who harrow us with the corpses?" "He was the backbone of the nation, but ought backbones to be exposed?" And from *Seven Men*, his latest book: "a small and faded, but circulating, library"; "his very age was moderate: a putative thirty-six, not more ('not less,' I would have said in those days)"; "Head or tail was just what I hadn't made of that slim green volume"; "a soft black hat of clerical kind but of Bohemian intention"; there are, too, hoaxes played upon the reader, such as the description of Prangle Valley, a delightful and undiscovered place quite close to London, which no one has ever heard of and which the author apologizes for giving away and helping to make popular: there are inspirations, as when it is suggested that King Edward (then reigning) should pay a state visit to Switzerland. Who would receive him? The President of the Swiss Republic. "You didn't expect that," he says. No more you did. You never thought of Switzerland as a Republic. There would be a banquet—

"Whereat His Majesty will have the President's wife on his right hand, and will make a brief, but graceful speech in the Swiss language (English, French, German, and Italian, consecutively) referring to the glorious and never-to-be-forgotten name of William Tell (embarrassed silence) and to the vast numbers of his subjects who annually visit Switzerland (loud and prolonged cheers). Next morning, let there be a review of twenty thousand waiters from all parts of the country, all the head-waiters receiving a modest grade of the Victorian order. Later in the day, let the King visit the National Gallery—a hall filled with picture-postcards of the most picturesque spots in Switzerland; and thence let him be conducted to the principal factory of cuckoo-clocks, and after some of the clocks have been made to strike, be heard remarking to the President, with a hearty laugh, that the sound is like that of the cuckoo."

Then there is the Pathetic Imposture (Yet Again) of the leader-writers who would not say "Lord Roseberry has made a paradox," but

"Lord Roseberry	{	whether intentionally or otherwise, we leave our reader to decide,	
		<i>or</i> , with seeming conviction,	
		<i>or</i> , doubtless giving rein to the playful humour which is characteristic of him,	
has	{	expressed a sentiment,	
		<i>or</i> , taken on himself to enunciate a theory,	
		<i>or</i> , made himself responsible for a dictum	
which	{	we venture to assert,	
		<i>or</i> , we have little hesitation in declaring,	
		<i>or</i> , we may say without fear of contradiction,	
is	{	nearly akin to	
		<i>or</i> , not very far removed from	
the paradoxical."			

In the same volume Mr Beerbohm scrutinizes in the same way The Humour of the Public, and compiles a list (which he proceeds to discuss quite literally) of the themes which amuse the public whether in the music halls or in the comic papers.



"Mothers-in-law	Old maids
Henpecked Husbands	Fatness
Twins	Thinness
Jews	Long hair (worn by a man)
Frenchmen, Germans,	Baldness
Italians, niggers	Sea-sickness
(not Russians, or other	Stuttering
foreigners of any	Bad Cheese
denomination)	'Shooting the Moon.' "

There is no nonsense about that essay: it is a scientific inquiry, based upon honest research. The author finds a plausible explanation for the public laugh in each case except that of Bad Cheese, which beats him, as well it may.

### III

His caricatures of all periods and the parodies collected in *A Christmas Garland* combine to demonstrate Mr Beerbohm's persistence in continuing to be his original self. Even easy and obvious parody of peculiar style may be clever and amusing, but there is much more than mere cleverness in these. Anybody with a knack for mimicry can exaggerate the salient eccentricities of an exceptional manner of writing, but in *A Christmas Garland* the parody is twofold: the style is imitated and the method of construction, but not too grossly caricatured: and better still the treatment apart from the actual subject of each parody—which is Christmas—is recognizable as the potential treatment of each separate victim. Mr Beerbohm might be described as a devil who has temporarily possessed these writers. In *Some Damnable Errors about Christmas* Chesterton is made to say:

"If Euclid were alive to-day (and I dare say he is) . . . ."

"We do not say of love that he is short-sighted. We do not say of Love that he is myopic. We do not say of Love that he is astigmatic. We say quite simply, Love is blind. We might go further and say, Love is deaf. That would be a profound and obvious truth. We might go further still and say, Love is dumb. But that would be a profound and obvious lie."



Mr John Galsworthy relates a story where Jacynth, an old lady, sorely tempts her old husband on Christmas morning to feed the birds outside their window. He has to remember that "these sporadic doles can do no real good"—must even degrade the birds who receive them.

And *Fond Hearts Askew* is a beautiful title for a story by Maurice Hewlett.

It may be said that P. C., X, 36 is unfair to Mr Rudyard Kipling, because it is a parody of an extremely various author's least pleasing manner. But that author's trick of displaying technical knowledge in an extremely nonchalant fashion is delightfully counterfeited, so that to the general reader Mr Beerbohm's nonsense seems just as right as Mr Kipling's academical accuracies.

"Now when Judlip sighs the sound is like unto that which issues from the vent of a Crosby boiler when the cog-gauges are at 260° F."

Judlip, moreover, flashes "his 45 c. p. down the slot of a two-grade Yale."

In fact, is it nonsense?

And there is no trifling (and perhaps temporary) insincerity of which an author may be guilty, for which Mr Beerbohm fails to belabour him, though it is with a jester's bladder. The more intimately the reader becomes acquainted with the writings of the persons mocked in *A Christmas Garland* the more severe grows the strain upon him in finding epithets of admiration for the parodies. It is indeed impossible to say how they could be improved.

Amongst others parodied is Henry James, but an earlier and more concentrated essence of that author's manner is to be found written, in Mr Beerbohm's way, not under or over, but close about two caricatures of him. In one of these Henry James is revisiting America.

" . . . so that, in fine, let, without further beating about the bush, me make to myself amazed acknowledgement that, but for the certificate of birth which I have, so very indubitably, *on me*, I might, in regarding, and, as it somewhat were, overseeing, *à l'oeil*

*de voyageur*, these dear good people, find hard to swallow, or even to take by subconscious injection, the great idea that I am—oh, ever so indigenously!—one of them.”

## IV

“The word ‘classic’ inevitably suggests itself,” wrote one reviewer when *The Happy Hypocrite* was first published, and a quarter of a century (which seems like a patent fact stated in terms of gross exaggeration) has shown that even a much profaned word may make a very sound suggestion. The story is now probably the most widely known of Mr Beerbohm’s works and lately has been re-issued, expensively and with illustrations. It is a good fairy-story—the ultimate expression of that daintiness already mentioned—apart from the accessories, such as foot-notes giving quotations from imaginary authorities, which are separately enjoyable, ornaments which do not draw away too much attention from a clearly defined outline.

Lord George Hell was a dreadfully naughty man, who at Carlton House, “often sat up until long after bedtime,” the mention of whose very name caused riotous children to “behave,” who “seldom sat down to the fashionable game of Limbo with less than four, and sometimes with *as many as seven* aces up his sleeve.” When the simple little dancer, Jenny Mere, refuses him, he thinks for a moment of drowning himself.

“There was no one in the garden to prevent him, and in the morning they would find him floating there, one of the noblest of love’s victims. The garden would be closed in the evening. There would be no performance in the little theatre. It might be that Jenny Mere would mourn him. ‘Life is a prison, without bars,’ he murmured, as he walked away.”

As with the fires at Chicago, so here, the unnecessary but usual, word was omitted. We are not directly told that Lord George thought better of his rash inspiration; and the elision is pleasing.

“I want the mask of a saint,” Lord George says to Mr Aeneas, the mask-maker.

"Mask of a saint, my lord? Certainly! With or without halo?"

That trick of modern and in this instance tradesman's phrasology is seen again in *Seven Men*. Savonarola speaks:

" . . . when I should occupy  
A felon's cell? O the disgrace of it!—  
The scandal, the incredible come-down!  
. . . I see in my mind's eye  
The public prints—'sharp sentence on a Monk!' "

Later Cesare Borgia says:—

"Lo! 'tis none other than the Fool that I  
Hoof'd from my household but two hours ago."

This, after pages of pseudo-Elizabethan.

*Zuleika Dobson*, or *An Oxford Love Story*, is the only long novel that Mr Beerbohm has published. It was planned and partly written whilst he was still an undergraduate, though no doubt the new part was not added without "scrutiny and titivation" of the old (to borrow his own words from an introductory note to *More*).

To be willing and able to continue writing a story dropped sixteen or seventeen years before is remarkable evidence of the permanency of his inspiration.

*Zuleika Dobson* must be measured in half a dozen different dimensions. First of all and most important it is an excellent story, apart from locality or time: it is a wonderful parody of various other novelists who have written about Oxford: it is a satire on Oxford itself: it is a history, every word of which is invented, but every word of which is essentially true: it is a study of character which, transcending realism, is genuine art in the innermost meaning of that expanding word: it covers all the ground upon which Max Beerbohm usually walks and finds for him fresh fields as well, notably in the account of Salt Cellar, one of the quadrangles of Judas College.

Once again it is difficult to quote, because quotations imply gems, and this book, without that tiresome coruscation which be-

comes a weariness, is a mine of them; and it is better to keep to the characteristic turns of thought. Sweat, Mr Beerbohm tells us, started from the brows of the Emperors outside the Sheldonian, as Zuleika Dobson drove by: and he goes on to tell us about these Emperors, who are "exposed eternally and exorably to heat and frost, to the four winds that lash them and the rains that wear them away, they are expiating, in effigy, the abominations of their pride and cruelty and lust; who were lechers, they are without bodies; who were tyrants, they are crowned never but with crowns of snow"; and as if that wasn't enough—"who made themselves even with the gods, they are of American visitors frequently mistaken for the Twelve Apostles." Zuleika Dobson, without being exactly beautiful, had by some accident of appearance and personality, seated herself with calm assurance upon a pinnacle of fame, the immediate excuse for which was an indifferent conjuring entertainment. In every country that she visited the men went mad for her.

"Prince Vierfünfsechs-Siebenachtneun offered her his hand, and was condemned by the Kaiser to six months' confinement in his little castle. In Yildiz Kiosk, the tyrant who still throve there conferred on her the Order of Chastity, and offered her the central couch in his seraglio. She gave her performance in the Quirinal and, from the Vatican, the Pope launched against her a Bull which fell utterly flat."

She was the inspiration of the New York Press:

"Zuleika Dobson walking on Broadway in the sables gifted her by Grand Duke Salamander Salamandrovitch—she says: 'You can bounce blizzards in them'; Zuleika Dobson yawning over a love-letter from Millionaire Edelweiss; relishing a cup of clam-broth—she says 'They don't use clams out there'; . . . starting for the musicale given in her honour by Mrs Suetonius X. Meistersinger, the most exclusive woman in New York; chatting at the telephone to Miss Camille Van Spook, the best-born girl in New York; laughing over the recollection of a compliment made her by George Abimelech Post, the best-groomed man in New York."

The hero of this novel is the Duke of Dorset, of whose feet it is said, "So slim and long were they, of instep so nobly arched, that only with a pair of glazed ox-tongues on a breakfast table were they comparable."

And another comparison:

"The moon like a gardenia in the night's button-hole—but no! Why should a writer never be able to mention the moon without likening her to something else—usually something to which she bears not the slightest resemblance? . . ."

Mr Beerbohm narrates his story as an eye-witness, who takes no part in its action: and is most conscientious in explaining how he, unlike some others, came to see not only what was passing in certain colleges and rooms, but in the minds of his characters. It appears that Clio was dissatisfied with the history books and of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, she said "*ὅστις τοῖα ἔχει ἐν ἡδονῇ ἔχει ἐν ἡδονῇ τοῖα.*" It occurred to her that it would be a fine thing if the historian had the novelist's privilege; she asked Zeus (who at that moment was disguised as the latest work of Miss Annie S. Swan) to give facilities and she chose Mr Beerbohm as the chronicler of Zuleika Dobson's visit to Oxford. Once, however, tugged in opposite directions by honour and fidelity to his employer, Max Beerbohm allowed himself an hour's ease from the latter strain. Zuleika poured a jug of water from her window on to the Duke. Mr Beerbohm floated up and regarded Oxford from a great height. He could not bear to pry upon the Duke in that dreadful moment. . . .

Seven Men, Mr Beerbohm's latest book, has been published too recently to need much comment. Almost throughout it the old nonsense remains, but allusion is more deft. Again and again we catch echoes of the earliest work, or, more exactly, since echoes die away—our memories are jogged. There are five stories in this volume, of which the first, *Enoch Soames*, reproduces the literary and a little of the social air of the 'nineties in such a way that time seems to become fluid, rolling back and exposing old rocks and more especially old houses built upon the sand.

At the end of this entirely delightful story, the author relates

how he nodded and smiled at the Devil (who plays an important part in the action of the story) and the Devil stares at him without recognition.

"To be cut—deliberately cut—by *him*! I was, I still am, furious at having had that happen to me."

A very awkward sentence—uncomfortable and difficult to say? Intentionally so. Nothing short of that triumphant dissonance would quite have conveyed the sense of childish petulance which is here required.

Certainly the full enjoyment of this story about an ineffectual and decadent poet predicates some familiarity with the period, and it is hard to say how, without that familiarity, the story would strike one. But that is not to say that its interest is ephemeral. If we say that the best stories in the language are those which are independent of period, locality, class, morals, and religion, we must be careful not to exclude one that derives much additional delectability from one at least of these shifting values.

## V

In his early essays Mr Beerbohm is deliberately and consciously self-satisfied with what he might then have called the cock-certainty of youth, which no doubt exasperated the more pompous of his elders. Indeed there are still people living whose only epithet for his work would be "affected." They would no doubt talk of "wasted powers" and a keen brain put to no serious purpose. Such people will find their attitude explained for them in the essay on *Going Back to School (More)*.

"Not that I had any special reason for hating school! Strange as it may seem to my readers, I was not unpopular there. I was a modest, good-humoured boy. It is Oxford that has made me insufferable. . . . Undergraduates owe their happiness chiefly to the consciousness that they are no longer at school. The nonsense which was knocked out of them at school is all put gently back at Oxford or Cambridge."

Very earnest folk, to whom the quiet, and indeed harmless, amusement of their fellow men makes no appeal, might find it in their eager hearts to condone that. But for the nonsense that, gently put back in 1890, remains in 1920, they can find no forgiveness. Mr Beerbohm has not tried, heavily, to make the world better: he has succeeded in making a small part of it happier. His hand is always light: in writing he has a soft, stroking touch, as sure and inevitable as, in drawing, his own "line." Of critics, in the essay on Ouida, Mr Beerbohm said:

"You may call it monstrous that a good writer should be at the mercy of such persons, but I doubt whether the good writer is himself aggrieved. He needs no mercy. And, as a matter of fact, the menaces hurled by the ordinary reviewers, whenever something new or strange confronts them, are very vain words indeed, and may at any moment be merged in clumsy compliments."

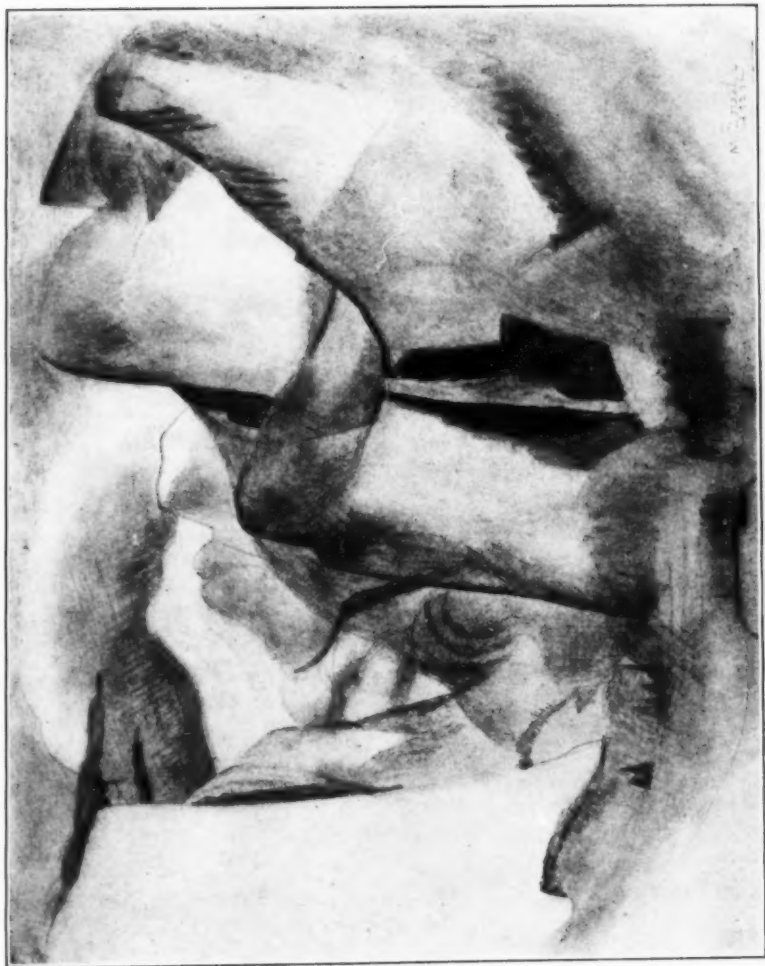
And there—as he might represent Henry James as saying—you, so very emphatically, are! Of Brummell, he wrote:

"But it is as an artist, and for his supremacy in the art of costume . . . and for that superb taste and subtle simplicity of mode . . . that I do most deeply revere him."

May the present writer, with all diffidence, eliminate the quotation marks and suppress the Brummell?

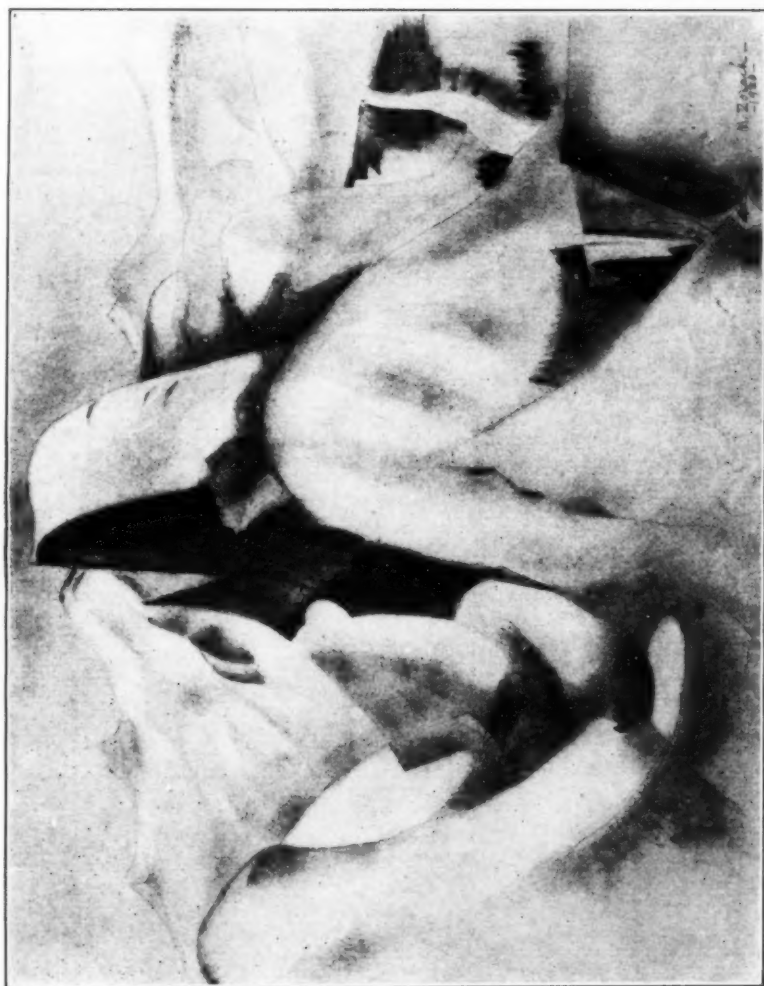
Seven Men, Mr Beerbohm's latest work to appear in this country, is published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, with six illustrations by the author. A new volume of essays has been announced in England.



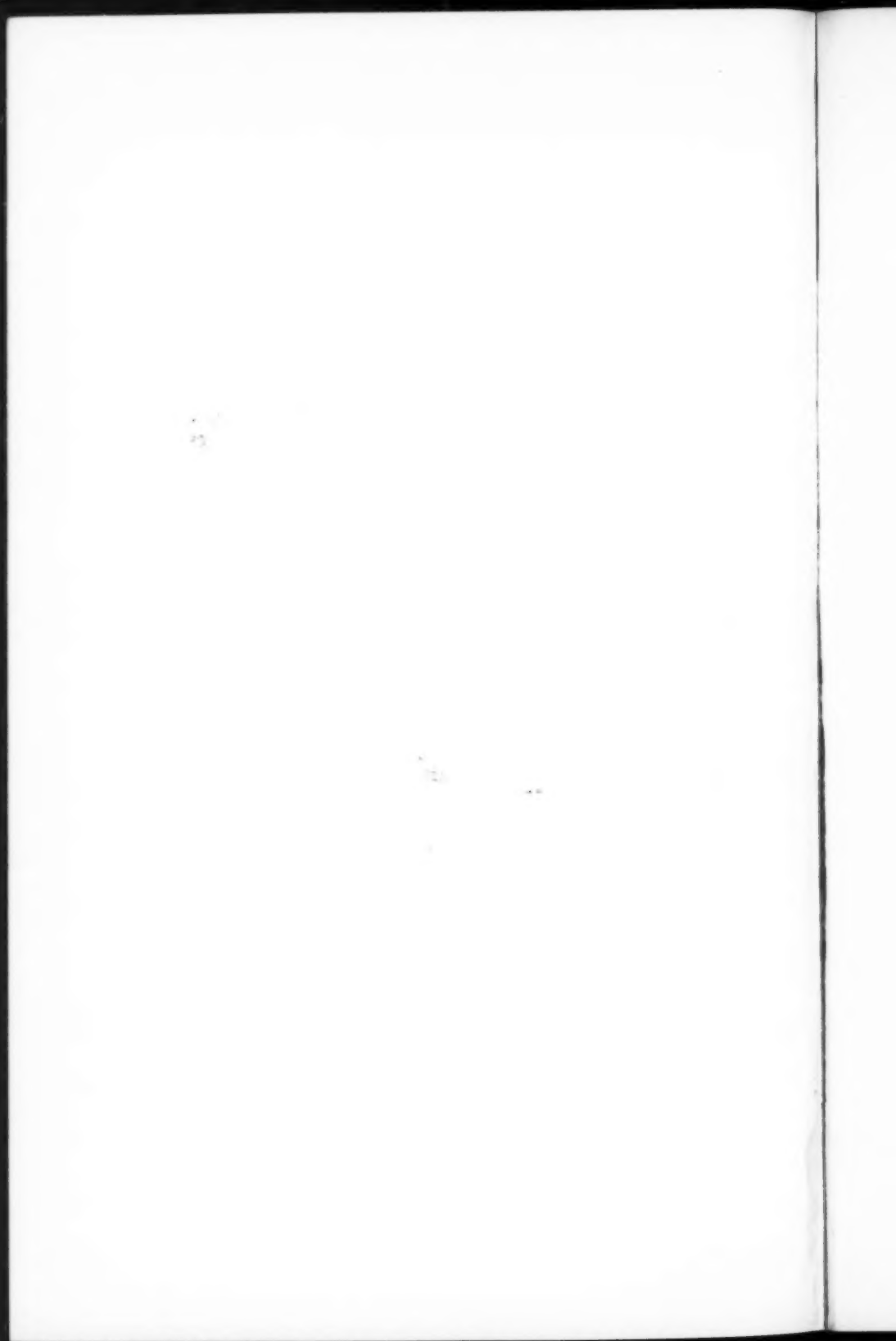


THE YOSEMITE VALLEY. BY MARGUERITE ZORACH





THE HALF DOME. BY MARGUERITE ZORACH



WAR MOODS  
BY ARTHUR WILSON

I

I saw a man of the name of God rise  
Like a peal of lilies. He scattered light,  
And with light, armies. Across the broad bright  
Back of the earth in smoky tumult flies  
His work. My feet take hold on death. Vain cries  
Jet forth of me, like roses, in God's sight;  
And suddenly my flesh shivers with might  
Of dying—"God, answer me my torn eyes!"

"They fight for peace who fight at all," God saith;  
"They best who kiss the purple throb of pain.  
Dust are they now, but dust will not remain.  
Out of this horrid earth with shouting faith  
They shall leap like arrows. If Life is Death  
Be sure that Death is only Life again."

## II

Go over, years, go over. Let him live.  
Mark him and be astonished; he will make  
The Spring again, and utter song. I give  
My only all, but him you must not take.

A noise of fighters in the fighting places;  
A blasphemy of guns, where, with no breath,  
Piteous little gashed boys writhe and lift faces  
In the golden delirium of death.

Go over, years, go over. Let one flower  
Crash with white bells of truth this petalled gloom,  
Unruined live while others in an hour  
Slip down the delicate tideways of doom.

God's aching eyes; foamed lips; and the shrewd haze  
Of violet smoke-roses where life shuts!  
All the land's bright flesh stirred in one mauve blaze,  
Streaked with bayonets lean out-letting guts!

Go over, years, forget. He minds not death,  
Nor should he, even though in that last storm  
Lewd horns of crimson music drown his breath  
And bleeding kisses wash his sun-densed form!

## III

Alone at last I fail like one in love,  
Mouth crushed to earth in desperate delight;  
Or sitting watch the lazy petals of  
A poppy feast on fading crumbs of light.

The battle-shoutings die in anguished prayer;  
Brief tones of light mysteriously blow to stars;  
And pleading space with holy eyes astare  
Steals like a little nurse to kiss my scars.

I see the sultry hills that slowly rose  
Under the winds of steel: and here are they  
Who tossed their vibrant happy hearts in throws  
Of blood like crimson curses all this day.

Pale sleepers in the gloam, pale heroes told,  
Pale warriors one with moon-dust-drift to-night,  
No more than haunting notes of music-gold  
Struck from the gongs of illimitable light.

To-morrow I may journey on the Quest:  
So let me think in terms of long ago  
The only truth is being at your best,  
The only beauty is in dying so.

I shall fall like a blind black bird, of birth  
By screaming eagles, one of these wild hours;  
And shouting dive into the daisied earth  
And take my immortality in flowers.



## IV

Where are they now who kissed the Shade?  
Where are our lords who went away?  
Dun herds, dun herds, dun herds who played  
The game of battle unafraid?  
Out of the smoke, the flame, the neigh  
Of iron, swarmed up the last wall  
A foam of flesh still undismayed?  
Into the earth sink one and all.

Now by God's grace where is that gay  
Well-wisher, Paddy Dee? And Spade,  
King of his kind, the papers say?  
And where is strong Madonna laid,  
Who killed so many? Dizzy Dade,  
The clown (wings on his shoulders tall,  
Bells on his feet) by girls obeyed?  
Into the earth sink one and all.

Where are our knights who dreamed alway  
Of blood-bath, smoke-plume, cavalcade?  
Mock-duck, the cook, of one foray?  
And that Blond Beast who looped his strayed  
Entrails across his arm, delayed?  
The lances, guns, the bugle-call,  
Apples and flagons, gold brocade?  
Into the earth sink one and all.

God, where the battle rolled all day  
My heroes fell in ancient Gaul;  
Ashes and echoes, dust and clay,  
Into the earth sink one and all.

## ITALIAN LETTER

*January, 1921*

**A**NYBODY interested in getting some understanding of the times we are living in must go—and beneath the surface—into a number of important movements which we are examining here in Italy because we are Italians and find Italian materials ready to hand; though the movements themselves are widespread, not to say general.

In a preceding note we explained—and with the meticulous thoroughness of a pedant, we thought—what the young men of the last twenty years have been driving at. To belong to one's own time, however benighted that time may be, to attain one's own vision of things and create one's own poetry, are obligations no reasonable man would shirk, if he could. So possibly we owe it to ourselves, out of loyalty to the faith that is in us, to elucidate a number of questions that arise in the same connection and reduce them, if that be possible, to their simplest terms. With a vagueness corresponding to the vagueness of the subject itself, people are talking, as we are talking ourselves, about "restorations," about "returns to the past," or, more precisely, about "classicism" and "neo-classicism."

To make the meaning of such words clear—who will doubt that their significance is as tremendous as it is uncertain?—we must adopt a purely negative procedure. Since the present conditions of art are felt, generally, to be a final consequence of romanticism—a term which, with all due reserves, we take in a psychological, and, so far as Italy is concerned, an historical sense—the escape from those conditions has assumed the form of a relentless indictment of this decadent, this lifeless romanticism, the nature of which we ought to understand better if for no other purpose than that of destroying it more expeditiously.

This latter-day romanticism is fundamentally a romanticism that has survived its own funeral. The life-drama that inspired and justified it, originally, has run its course, leaving an heritage behind that has lost its value. We have still with us, in other

words, the rhetoric of romanticism. In that rhetoric we are wallowing up to our necks as with a growing resentment and with all our illusions gone we are coming to realize. Our poetry has been trying to live apart from developments in philosophy, in thought, deriving from the latter indeed only an impulse toward lyricism which, unable to embrace totality—the soul of art—has scattered its energies in pursuit of the fragment, in an effort bound to be sterile in its ultimate achievements however significant in some minor respects it may be. Philosophical idealism, perhaps for the very reason that if properly understood it would have laid a very formidable task upon the poet, has not proved to be a productive stimulus in the field of art and has remained a state of mind rather than a mood.

The exasperating paradox resulting is the typical paradox of all periods of decadence—I may cite in evidence the experience of Italy in the late Cinquecento and all through the Seventeenth Century. Art cannot live on the bread of charity. It can thrive only by the sweat of its own brow. Its rejuvenation must be thoroughgoing, comprise the totality of the spirit, lay hold upon the soul and not upon the mind only; just as romanticism, in its time, was a dolorous rebirth of the whole spirit of Italy and, because of that all-embracing scope, was able to save poetry—in Manzoni.

This post-romanticism of ours, for all of its plethora of intellect, is distinctly anaemic in faith; indeed for lack of faith—faith in its own inner world—it is now in its dying agony. Everything is from the brain in the literature and art of our younger generation; and the various tendencies, the various schools and reforms that have passed and are passing through the life of our time are reactions of an intellectual character, various positions assumed for attacking this or that aspect of one general condition.

Now schools have little importance in themselves; but we must admit, if we are honest, that the critical perspicacity in which all this brain-storming has resulted is, fortunately, the driving power that is impelling post-romantic art to rise superior to itself. In view of all we have been through in recent years it will soon be impossible, even for the most ingenuous souls, to be led astray by such aberrations as excessive colouration, overstress on the picturesque, undue emphasis on sentiment, fondness for the exceptional,

vagueness of expression, confusionism in verbiage—things, all, that bade fair to endure as the most dangerous of the legacies the new fads passed on to us. If we reflect that the opposite of all these—accuracy of line, introspection, sound and solid architecture, and so on—are the distinctive traits of periods of the “grand style,” we can see a possible meaning, in our own day, of the word “neo-classicism,” as an aspiration, an inclination, of the critical mind toward a classic form, for which, meanwhile, every substantial prerequisite is lacking. In this sense of the term, neo-classicism has spread all over Europe and even to the United States—I am speaking of the time just before the war—and has affected all the arts. Just think of what happened in painting, after impressionism, through cubism and all the primitivistic and pre-Raphaelite movements of French and our own Italian painters who, through Cézanne and Ingres, go back as far as Poussin!

It is about the same with literature. Not to mention such tendencies as are deliberately reactionary, it is clear that the very people who seem to be most advanced—for instance the French dadaists of the moment or the Italian paroliberists of yesterday—are, after all, turning away from the sentimental and the picturesque and getting down to essential forms; and, throwing consistency to the winds—for logically anything classic should be taboo with them—are gaily knocking the last leg from under the decadence.

With this view of the negative aspects of a decrepit romanticism struggling from the very excellence of its critical insight to get away from itself by contradicting everything it has stood for in the past, we must now examine the only positive result our young men are trying to attain; and there will be less danger of misunderstandings here if we look at things from the most characteristic view point of contemporary theory—the concern as to form.

Theoreticians of painting—the most modernist ones too—are for ever harping on design, perspective, study of the masters. And no one will deny that such advice, however rarely followed, is good advice; since something must be done to instil into the anarchists of the present a knowledge of the trade they simply cannot do without—technique, to be unpardonably frank, which may not indeed have anything to do with the essence of art, but still does enable a man to express himself accurately and fully.

Just as salutary also is the tendency of such writers as are now uncompromising in their reaction against anarchy in style, which has by this time done all the good and all the harm it was able to do. I may cite one name as the most significant in this respect—that of Carlo Linati. But we must bear in mind that such sound doctrine solves only part of the problem. The value of a word honestly, properly, used, however great its efficacy may be, has no such miracle-working power as can restore a life and a vitality to poetry that must come, wholly, exclusively, from the spirit. Technical problems arise only when the critic is fashioning his abstractions. The poet's concern is with expression alone.

Poetry acquires new life only as it feels new moods; and these create their own expressive forms. A classicism based merely on a new technique is nothing but a fiction—and a dangerous one—of the critical mind, a fiction originating in the failure adequately to understand certain fundamental traits in classic art. Classicism may easily seem to be an art where the poet is so far lost in his own poetical world that he sinks his own, his personal, vision in the objectivity of things. But such objectivity, not to belie its own purpose and *raison d'être*, must always involve a happy betrayal: *Bene vixit qui bene latuit!*

Nobody, surely, is so barbarian nowadays as to take any stock in that doctrine of the artist's aloofness from the matter observed which the Parnassians vaunted so loudly against those who would find the artist in the work he creates. It is even trite to remark that there is nothing more Flaubertian in the world than the characters whom Flaubert prided himself on having least in common with. Frédéric, and Madame Bovary, for all their pretended objectivity, are faithful representatives of the author's raging nihilism.

So in the classic poet as well, the lyric individuality is as influential as it may be inobvious. He has the same inner burning, the same faith in his poetic world, though he views the latter under its universal aspects and treats all details with definiteness absolute—a manner and a view which we recognize as classic.

The art of "pure form" is the noblest emprise of an age that is spiritually dead. One thinks of a parallel that might be drawn in the ethical field, a morality of "pure form" related to pragmatic anarchy in ethics as the art of "pure form" stands toward anarchy in style. But Kant, the last philosopher to resurrect that fallacy,

refuted it in the very system he built around it. And no better luck may come, perhaps, to our neo-Kantians in art. Not that the inconsistency would in itself be harmful; for the gate to salvation is through the spirit, just as the Bible says. And we shall be saved not by denying individuality in art but by having that individuality born again in accord with the spritual needs of our time, and by an inner process which will transform the work of art in its entirety, recreating the historical matter from which the modern life-drama must spring.

In fact, even in the very worst manifestations of our decadence, the few signs of life come from the resistance the artist's personality offers to the efforts made to suppress it, and they are hopeful in proportion as this resistance is strong. Irony itself, to become a real inspiration to poetry, must give wings rather than poison to the drama of life.

In short, the "return to form" that is being preached to-day would, if accomplished, mean a flop from a bastard romanticism into a bastard classicism, from a frying-pan we know is hot enough into a fire of whose terrors we have no conception. The disease of romanticism has been diagnosed, and microscoped in all its historical causes and evolution. Classicism is offered us as a remedy, whose effects upon us we do not know, though we should have to shoulder responsibility for them. Fortunately, however, schools go one way and poetry itself another; and the spirit, and not the mind, is the final arbiter in all these dire travails of art!

ENZO FERRIERI

# BOOK REVIEWS

## A BUILDER OF HISTORY

THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY. By H. G. Wells. Two volumes. Illustrated. 12mo. 1324 pages. The Macmillan Company. New York.

WHEN these words appear in THE DIAL, the world of literary supplements, magazines, and newspaper blurbs will have said all that possibly can be stated upon the subject of H. G. Wells and his Outline of History.

Learned men will have noted, described, and annotated whatever slips and misstatements the mocking Gods of our Modern Hurry have sprinkled across the thirteen hundred pages of these two mighty tomes. Men of less learning but of greater enthusiasm will have used little texts from this great book to preach their own sermons of faith and hope, minus the charity.

But as an humble fellow worker in the vineyard of Clio, I must refrain both from praise and criticism.

I can only express profound gratitude. If I were a Russian peasant, and lived in the darkest interior of the distant Omsk government, I would burn a little candle to my Patron Saint and I would thank him that I had lived to see the world set free of one terrible superstition.

For many generations we have been held prisoners in the dungeons of Teutonic *Wissenschaftlichkeit*. Our jail was in the heart of a mighty fortress, built upon a high mountain of established facts, surrounded by vast marshes of footnotes and dense forests of documentation. Whenever we peered out from behind the bars to catch a breath of fresh air—to get a glimpse of the distant and joyous world, the turnkeys pulled us back and told us to study our books and not waste our time upon useless frivolities. It is true a few brave men ventured forth to relieve our suffering, but they were either lost in the near-by morass or they perished under the deluge of mildewed wisdom which the watchmen of the tower poured down upon their courageous but foolhardy enemies.



Then, one day, the miracle happened.

A very ordinary citizen—no spurs, no medals, no indications of high rank—kicked in the door of our dungeon—he opened the window to let in the light of day—he started the victrola running—he brought us the latest copies of the sporting papers and when the keepers remonstrated with him on account of his unseemly behaviour within their hallowed walls, he used very plain language—threw the key of the gate into the moat and gave orders that the countless bales of wisdom which lay stored within our ancient garrets and cellars be carried to the market place and be exhibited for the benefit of the humble citizens who dwelt in the towns and villages of the vast countryside.

For this is the true and lasting value of the work of Wells—that he has given our world a greatest common historical denominator. All of his contentions and all of his opinions will not be equally appreciated by all of his readers. But whatever differences of personal opinion may exist, the good people of Japan and Russia and Germany and France and the Argentine and Siam will find, within these two volumes, certain main points of a common interest upon which they can agree without reservations.

The world needed this book and needed it badly.

Our great-grandfathers who obtained their history from the books of the Old Testament possessed certain definite historical conceptions which followed them into the barren wilderness of Massachusetts and across the veldt of Africa.

Modern criticism has long since exploded the propagandistic fables of Exodus and Deuteronomy. This labour of destruction was necessary. But the scientific historian left the wreckage behind while he hastened to new tasks and did not bother about erecting a new edifice. Research was triumphant, but the public was left out in the cold, exposed to the storms of their provincial prejudices and the terrible dark of international ignorance.

Wells has given us all a new home.

Some of the tenants will object to the architecture of the roof and others will dislike the arrangements of the cellar. The windows of several rooms let in a draught of doubt. The pictures upon the walls are not of equal value.

But the building stands, firm and sound, and the master can be proud of his handiwork.

HENDRICK WILLEM VAN LOON

## THE SOUL OF WIT

JAPANESE POETRY. *The "Uta."* By Arthur Waley. Illustrated. 12mo. 110 pages. Oxford University Press. New York.

JAPANESE HOKKUS. *By Yoné Noguchi.* 16mo. 115 pages. Four Seas Company. Boston.

THE satire of the Roman intellectual, the epigram of the wigged and lacy Frenchman, the poignancy of an American poet dying at thirty with the major part of her work undone, have one thing in common. This is shared by a race of poets older than the United States, older than the civilization of Paris, fresh and young before the Imperial City ever was built. Apparently Japanese poetry is utterly different from these others in one important respect. Its brevity is not the *fine fleur* of a culture travelling from the loose barbarism of the epic toward the exquisite refinement of the *bon mot*. Among the oldest specimens of Japanese poetry extant one finds long poems or "long-songs" as they are called—alternating five and seven syllable lines—but there are only three hundred and twenty-four of these in contrast with over four thousand "short-songs" of five lines. It is easy enough to draw comparisons between the ancient Noh drama and the ritual drama of the Greeks. It is decidedly difficult to find anything in the literature of the West which recalls these brief lyrics, which confine within seventeen or at most within thirty-one syllables the passion of a life or the shadowing imminence of death.

Lafcadio Hearn on the one hand and John Gould Fletcher on the other have tried to bring the western world into touch with the spirit illuminating these foreign songs. It remained for Arthur Waley, to whom we are indebted for so much of what is vital in the poetry of the East, to collect a group of Japanese "uta" poems, with some grammatical notes and a vocabulary, to bring the English reader *en rapport* with the essence of these Spring poems and death songs.

As a jest lies in the ear of him that hears it, so the worth of

these seemingly slight lines lies in their rich allusiveness. What appears to the Occidental as trivial, rings for his Eastern brother with the slow echo of a temple bell. It is as much from the foot-notes as from the translations themselves that incense rises from these pages. Thus, the literal reading is not "My heart . . . is like a swift river," but "My heart . . . swift-river-like." The Japanese for "waking up startled" is "having woken-startled." Mr Waley translates as "the Lightning" what is really "the Thunder-God flashing." Especially beautiful and striking are the fixed epithets, which, curiously enough, are poetry to the western ear, but stock expressions to the Japanese. "Fuy-komori," for example, meaning Winter-imprisoned, is a fixed epithet of spring. "Aratama," which the translator declares "probably only means new," is a fixed epithet of the New Year and is written with characters meaning "new jewels." And then there are the queer Oriental compounds, the turnings of phrase, the charm that is begotten of strangeness. The poet, wondering when he will go to bed, is wondering "When I do a 'Shall I lie down.'" The wakeful lover laments, "As for the night spent, there was not even a shall-sleep means." The lover comparing his love to the movement of water under ice asks, "Is it because I am the freezing-on-top of the winter-river that my love . . ." And finally there is that line of pure poetry: "Autumn will come (and find) a not-forgetting." The more elaborate and intricate *double-entendre* is too long to quote. Practically every poem is a pun or an acrostic.

In the preface to *The Awkward Age* Henry James makes a note, with reference to good talk — to representing the allusive responsiveness of a group in a self-centred and sophisticated society — on "the beauty and the difficulty . . . of escaping poverty *even though* the references in one's action can only be, with intensity, to each other, to things exactly on the same plane of exhibition as themselves." It is of this that the *uta* makes one think. It is all compact of references, intense references, but these are all or nearly all only "to things [one might perhaps say to people] on the same plane of exhibition as themselves."

And yet there are many reminiscences here of the poetry with which we are more familiar. *Nous n'irons plus au bois* is sung in the same sad key. There are lyrics of meeting and farewell, there are haunting scents of spring, there is the red hush of autumn,

drifting into a barren silence. Catullus of the countless kisses sings in Japanese:

"My love—  
If you care to know (its quantity)  
Count the number  
Of the waves which may be approaching  
The sea-shore at Tago."

There is a foreboding of *Où sont les neiges d'antan?* in the reversal of thought of the Emperor Sutoku:

"The flowers to the tree's root,  
The birds to their old nest  
Have returned;  
But whither spring has gone  
No man knows."

And there is probably no language which fails to hold such a song of sorrow as this one:

"Because he is young  
And will not know the way to go  
Would I could bribe  
The messenger of the Underworld  
That on his shoulders he might carry him!"

The difference between the Japanese spirit and our own can be measured by the difference between these translations and another book of Japanese poems which were written in English by Yoné Noguchi. Noguchi writes hokkus — the uta has fourteen more syllables than the hokku — some actually in the seventeen-syllable measure, but all endeavours to capture the hinted expression of rich meanings. Whether it is because he is writing in a foreign language, or because English cannot have packed into it the associations of thousands of years and the treasure of half-forgotten philosophies, the Japanese poet fails to produce the effect achieved by Waley in his translations from these very old lyrics. There is in fact one hokku that seems like an odd rearrangement of Symons'

"Oh to part now, and parting now,  
Never to meet again,  
To have done forever, I and thou,  
With joy, and so with pain."

It runs:

"Oh, to part now, does it mean that we shall never meet again?  
To have done forever with joy, thou and I,  
Then to begin with pain again!"

Japanese poetry is utterly distinct from the sick languors of the eighteen-nineties. It is crisp and terse, rich and brief. *Weltschmerz* is heavier when it goes half-uttered. Beauty, like music and fragrance, is sharpest when it is passing. The western poet can learn from these old poems a new intensity: written, like the characters for the New Year, to mean "new jewels."

BABETTE DEUTSCH

## MR VACHEL LINDSAY'S FUTURE

THE GOLDEN BOOK OF SPRINGFIELD. *By Vachel Lindsay, a Citizen of that Town.* 12mo. 329 pages. The Macmillan Company. New York.

THE good citizens of Springfield, Illinois, in These States, are, we have reason to believe, in something of a flurry on account of Mr Lindsay's book about the Springfield that is to be. Returning from his triumph in England, Mr Lindsay has found his people busy identifying his characters and has assured them, as a patriot would, that only the good and the true among them are flung across his bridge of a hundred years. The bad ones, he says, are all Peoria folk.

Through sources authoritative enough to be called unimpeachable, information has reached the writer sufficient for all but the most minutely curious. But it would be unfair to identify the characters without identifying, at least for a moment, the quality of the book itself.

In a somewhat awkward setting—a prognosticators' club, a book revealed, characters foreseeing themselves after a century—Mr Lindsay has told the story of the town he loves as it will be Anno Domini 2018. It is an adventure story with riots, lynchings, air-duels, spies, politics, grafters, civic idealism, buried treasure (and even buried booze!), things eternal and things trivial. Springfield within its outer and inner walls, trafficking with Chicago but hating urban corruption, Springfield a city which is a University and a Fair, fluttering pennons in every wind, loyal to the World Government, to the United States, to Illinois, and to itself, putting individualists in jail for treason and adoring a girl who rides with a sword, Springfield with more than a suggestion of the guilds restored and with the millenium still distant—all this is Mr Lindsay's country.

It is interesting chiefly because of the vehemence with which all of his people seem to take their jobs. They may not be real people, even in the fictional sense, but they are energies let loose and they represent what one poet thinks America can be. To one

reader the great material blessing of the New Springfield is the continual outcropping of the old. To another it may be the vogue of coffee. Mr Lindsay's America, in any case, may smack of the uplift as decidedly as Carol Kennicott, but it has a thousand times her intensity.

One reason may be that the author has not done what his fellow-citizens think he has done. Writing of the future in such a fashion as to declare a vision and set forth a way toward it, he was writing also a social satire. His people are therefor outstanding personalities, and in some cases they are the dominant types of American life. Mr Lindsay wants his book to be a civic Koran. It is to prevent the amateur sleuths from reducing it to an acrostic that the following key is given.

Gregory Webster, the artist, is in 1920 an obvious sketch of the teacher at the New York School of Art of whom Mr Lindsay always boasts—the late William M. Chase. In 2018 he “becomes” Sparrow Short, and in that incarnation is a plain caricature of Walt Whitman, no less. Rabbi Terence Ezekiel, who figures as a devotee of the movies and as a reformer in politics, is unquestionably Rabbi Stephen S. Wise of New York; Mother Grey and her associates are to be taken as Mr Lindsay's tribute to Mrs Eddy and her fellow-workers; the fighting, sword-forging Michaels are descendants of Andrew Jackson whose life is suggested in the brief biography of the founder of the clan; in the case of Black Hawk Boone, Mr Lindsay has not even disguised, but he has added William Morris to Daniel Boone as prototype; St Friend is no Springfieldian of the day, but St Francis of Assisi; Cave Man Thomas derives from Douglas Fairbanks and an evangelist named Reverend Billy Sunday; the sinister Singaporean can be loosely identified by the activities attributed to Professor Münsterberg during the bad days of the war; Mayo Sims represents the idea of McKinleyism (didn't Mr Lindsay write Bryan! Bryan! Bryan! Bryan!) wherever it appears. Portia, the singing aviator, is Miss Harriet Monroe. The identity of Avel we can not disclose.

The architectural changes noted by Mr Lindsay are less mystifying, but it will interest those who live not far from Fifth and Monroe, that they are already possessed of one of the Sunset Towers which are in the future to ring the town. As for Mr Lindsay's



war, it is not obscure. I take at full value his intention to enlist the intelligence by making Japan our ally instead of our enemy.

These are, I believe, the major mysteries, and they are not of the highest importance. More important, to American literature, is the fact that this book comes to take its place in an unpremeditated collection of books on the Middle West, books of which Mr Lindsay may well say that they are written "with the fanatical zeal of the major Prophets of the Old Testament," for to the believer in America they all possess the divine fire. We may mention *Main Street*, *Moon-Calf*, *Poor White*, *Mitch Miller*, *The Domesday Book*, and Shelby M. Harrison's book, *Social Conditions in an American City*, dealing directly with Mr Lindsay's own city. We have heard directly enough that Mr Lindsay considers the publication of these books as a triumphant event in his own life. His own courage and dash are magnificent. He may not establish the festival of Johnny Appleseed nor lead us on pilgrimages to the Hundred Shrines; but he has shown us that to one aborigine—we may call him that—America is still what it used to be to the alien-born, the Land of Promise.

GILBERT SELDES

## AESTHETICS AGAIN

**AESTHETICS:** *A Critical Theory of Art.* By H. G. Hartman. 12mo. 250 pages. R. G. Adams and Company. Columbus.

MR Hartman's book is strange and significant. It is strange that a man of to-day should, at times, write with the dead and pretentious erudition of the old Scotch sciolists; that a modern professor should elaborate his reasonings in a manner similar to the monachal logicians of the Middle Ages who argued everlastingly of a heaven they had never entered; that, in a world rich in literary and pictorial masterpieces, a man should neither read nor see. It is significant, among the mass of worthless treatises written on the aesthetic problem, that the author of this small volume should be, at times, dangerously sane and gratifyingly honest; that he should be the first American to place insistence on the material elements employed in the making of the object of art. He has avoided the easy and impressive practice of most writers—the immediate transition from fundamental criticism to hypothetical word-painting; and it is eminently to his credit that most of his chapters are devoid of poetical nonsense and are rigorously bound to his essential thesis.

Art, to the creator, is form, that is, the ultimate and sequential order assumed by his materials; to the layman who goes to art for diversion it is suggestion, a vague and varying emotion aroused in him by a misunderstanding of the materials; and because of this erroneous and secondary interest most comments on aesthetics are of no importance. No experience is unproductive of associative images, and in examining the completed object, where the constituents are drawn from a repository of general experience, it is extremely difficult for the average observer to apprehend these factors in their artistic relationship instead of being carried away by the subordinate appeal of one or more of the separate parts. Mr Hartman, in emphasizing materiality, makes it possible for many an amateur to approach art with a fair chance of finding its meaning. A painting, or a poem, must be considered concretely;

adequate appreciation is gained only when the ingredients are carefully weighed and judged in their combination toward unity. The end of creative activity is artistry—not truth, nature, life, or any other abstraction—and the artist strives, consciously and unconsciously, to manipulate his materials so that their kinship in the finished work is recognized at once as organic and inevitable. It is not art for art's sake that inspires him, nor art for expression's sake—it is his love of organization, the power to bend the materials of experience into a form that can be grasped in its entirety. Like all serious men he labours to make a statement beyond the fragmentary utterances of every-day life. He who works for art's sake, for the cheap pleasure of skilful rendition, whose life is devoted to the acquisition of mechanical proficiency, has missed the goal, as he who is satisfied with mere expression and professes to tell the story of his soul with a random splash of colour or a soothing word, has missed it.

But Mr Hartman's interpretation of materiality is gravely confusing; at no point does he quite succeed in dissociating it from that bastard issue known as technique. If we regard the material of art as the actual matter undergoing fusion in the artist's hands, that is, literal phrase and pigment; and if we regard virtuosity and deft brushing of first importance, nothing remains but craftsmanship upon which to build our structure of appraisal and to establish our conception of art as a social impetus.

It is obvious that good craftsmanship is a necessary thing, but it is equally obvious that it cannot by the most liberal extension of its meaning account, either historically or aesthetically, for the many and diverse manifestations of art which confront the student. Were mechanical perfection in itself sufficient, were the beauty of colour and the intricate flow of line, with all of their involved complexities, not instigated by something far more profound than the ideal of impeccable carpentry, we should have no explanation of the dissatisfactions and revolutions that follow, one upon the other, in the world of art. In truth, were this material beauty the quintessence of art, no new forms would ever appear: the repetition and perfection of old and standardized models would be enough to occupy the mind of the artist.

It is this characteristic of Mr Hartman's argument that is weak and misleading. His theory logically pursued would limit the

study of art to its surface attributes. Of course, one must first penetrate the surface, and if the author succeeds in enlisting a few Americans into contemplating even the superficial forms of art without wandering away into sentimental rhapsodies, a good deal will have been accomplished. But as an explanation of art his book is disappointing. After the dogmatic assurances of the preface that aesthetic values have, at last, been eternally fixed, the failure is more keenly apparent. Mr Hartman's knowledge of the psychology of art and artists is defective. Had he been in a position to analyse the origins of the Modern Movements, and to observe the art forms which have accompanied it, he would have discovered treasures infinitely beyond the mechanical fusion of matter which he stresses with such prominence.

That the material of art is of supreme importance is undeniable, but to maintain this supremacy it must be made identical with form—form selected and differentiated in the mind of the artist, and wholly divorced from matter, or more precisely, from the instruments and appliances used in presentation. The student of aesthetics must not forget that the concrete object before him is the fruit of a cumulative process of laborious selection, and that it is not the externalization of an original and complete idea already executed in the brain and demanding only perfect technique for its revelation. Hence it will be seen that the meaning of art is to be gathered from the study of the psychology of the selective operations of composition, and in no case from the exhaustive investigation of the mechanics of exposition. No wholly significant opinions on the problem can be voiced by one who is not familiar with the mental equipment of artists; in fact, it ought to be well known by this time that the great secrets of plastic endeavour, the meaning of Michelangelo's sculptures, for instance, and the understanding of Balzac, are for ever withheld from those who have never created anything.

Mr Hartman's knowledge of painting has been derived from books and not from pictures. There is no evidence in his curious comments that he has ever seen a canvas, or a painter at work. In discussing this branch of art he divides the elements of a picture into two classes which are arbitrarily designated Presentative and Representative. The old question of content drives him into the prodigious blunder of separating form from a supposititious idea

which the form is constrained to embody. When art is esteemed as anything more than a vehicle for extraneous ideas no such division can be made. The distinguishing feature of art is that it has no ideas separable from its form. In this respect it differs from philosophy, science, and history, where thought may adopt any one of a number of forms and still preserve its essential meaning. In art the material garnered from experience retains its meaning only in the form given it—change one detail and another meaning instantly appears. A painter drawing an arm attempts to deliver a definite unit of form and has no intention of conveying a detached idea. By association an abstract idea may attend the delivery, but even this abstraction would have to be re-established if the configuration of the drawing were altered.

It is unfortunate that the aesthetician is so seldom an artist. Were he to practise any one of the arts intelligently he would never confound the purely creative processes with those of documentary expression and translate the meaning of art into terms of philosophy, religion, science, or sentiment. In performing the tasks of his own critical department he begins with confused ideas which he proceeds to clarify in verbal form, and having analysed the parturition of his own productions he concludes that art is brought to light in similar fashion, and an aesthetic is erected on the basis of his personal experience. It is plain to him that all abstract ideas are of necessity inchoate until they are formulated; it is also evident that in his own work these ideas may have several forms and be equally intelligible, and from these deductions he drops naturally into the fallacy of placing the form and content of art into separate categories and insisting that the art idea is capable of as many forms as his own ideas.

In painting, all construction begins with materials concretely experienced. Ideation occurs in the act of manipulation and the true meaning of the picture lies in the total form consequent upon the handling of the materials and is inseparable from it. The precepts of science and philosophy may be couched in many languages: an art idea is intrinsic to the form in which it first appears. In the scientific sense, art can do nothing for truth or knowledge—it rules another sphere which we must patiently explore to discover its value.

When a painter delineates an arm he is moved by fact memor-

ized or felt and not by a predetermined abstraction. During the period of construction the abstraction is born: whatever is ideological is to be found in his conception of the affinity of the separately experienced parts. The opinion, prevalent among critics, that a painter visualizes the complete form of his graphic object before attempting to present it is absolutely without foundation. This error, above all others, is responsible for the division of art into form and idea with an intervening technique. It is responsible for the vagaries of the hedonists, empiricists, and associationists, who, with subtle premises drawn from this triple partition, give preponderance to one of the members. Mr Hartman begins well, but his theory of materials convicts him of analogous errors and virtually leaves us to discover the truth of art in some sort of technical excellence. Somewhat more crudely and with results far more damaging to art the dealer in pictures shares the same opinions. In the galleries where paintings are exploited the only terms used are those relating to surface appearances—"scintillating," "jewel-like," "a gem"—and the like.

Expressionism, with its firm stand for the individual, has abolished many critical sophistries, yet, as a philosophical explanation of art it is untenable. Mr Hartman is one of the first writers to disclose the weaknesses of this theory, and for this he is to be applauded, but the very objections which he hurls against the mistakes of the expressionists, namely that art is a sublimated representation of something quite apart from the component elements, can be turned against himself with the same deadly effect. Until representation, in the terminology of aesthetics, is regarded as an associative quality no satisfactory rationale of art will ever appear. Representation of some sort by psychic necessity accompanies every art form—nothing outside of experience has ever been formally portrayed, and even in the most abstract examples of "Modern Art" it is impossible to escape the world of everyday fact. Art transcends representation when it implants in us the feeling of complete harmony, the conception of relativity; when it shapes into a compact unit all that is diffuse and incoherent in the life of man. The artist chooses his material from his myriad experiences and welds and moulds it into a single and complete statement. The psychology of art treats of the evolution of this idealistic organization.



Subject-matter is the motif, the stimulus to creation—art begins when this is lost in form. On the field of subjective material most of the critical battles have been waged, and absurd evaluations of the artist's susceptibility to nature have triumphed over what he has had to offer in the way of form. Such is the popular and journalistic attitude, where space is garishly filled by any idiosyncrasy that may be remotely connected with the artist's subjective preferences. This is legitimate when it concerns the personality of the artist, but it does not pertain to his compositions. The meaning of art, the centre of interest to the creative intellect, remains, as has been reiterated, in the organization of the materials of experience. It does not follow that the artist is limited to the range of his immediate contact with the objective world: his material is vast and comprehensive; it is influenced by every sentient moment; it is the aggregate of all those experiences which have taken form in his imagination. Were it not for the immeasurable mass of adaptable form stored in the mind, art would be a shallow and poverty-stricken affair.

Why writers of aesthetics pay such exorbitant and ponderous attention to the literature of art and so little to masterpieces is an inexplicable question. Possibly it is a professorial habit. Not once in his book does Mr Hartman try his theory on an object to see what will happen. Had he made this experiment he would have been convinced that the material of art is the stuff of experience formulated in the imagination; he would never have alienated form and content but would have realized that content, in the subjective sense, accompanies and is inseparable from all form; he would have agreed that the business of the artist is organization, the forging of many particulars into one form that is general.

THOMAS JEWELL CRAVEN



## THE MAKING OF A TORY

MEMOIRS OF LIFE AND LITERATURE. By *W. H. Mallock*. 12mo. 379 pages. Harper and Brothers. New York.

PROBABLY few readers of *The New Republic* remember the earlier adaptation of Plato's title in a book which appeared in the late 'seventies bearing the name of William Hurrell Mallock. The difference between the *New Republic* of to-day and Mr Mallock's conception is useful in marking the movement of thought in the intervening years. Our *New Republic* looks toward a reconstruction by democracy, by working from the base of the pyramid upward. Mr Mallock's proceeds from the apex, socially speaking. It is a discussion of Literature, Faith, and Philosophy in an English Country House, carried on in the midst of surroundings intended to recall the most perfect things in the inheritance and achievement of civilization. Otho Laurence has gathered a party of the intellectuals of his day at his villa on the south coast of England, and provided not only a physical but also a conversational bill of fare, beginning with the Aim of Life and lapsing by natural gradations into a discussion of the essentials of an ideal state of society. And as a method of procedure it is proposed to begin with the highest class in the state, and consider what "we really think that the highest and most refined life consists in, that is possible for the most favoured classes."

The discussion which follows is an anatomy, in the Elizabethan sense, of modern culture. Laurence's guests are indeed no other than the pundits and prophets of the day—and the caricature is almost as brilliantly impudent as Max Beerbohm's. Mr Luke, who is Matthew Arnold, gives us a delicious moment when he turns to Dr Jenkinson, who is Jowett, for support. "Personal immortality and a personal Deity are no doctrines of Christianity. You, Jenkinson, I know, agree with me." Pater as Mr Rose contributes to the discussion his aestheticism. Tyndall, Huxley, and Clifford, as Stockton, Storks, and Saunders, offer their scientific materialism respectively rendered sweet by sentiment, dry by stoicism, and bitter by mordant atheism. But it is to be noted that the discussion

concerns entirely what "society or the life of the highest classes would be at its best." Even Herbert, who with the golden voice of Ruskin utters the final prophecy of doom to a culture which has no longer faith in God, immortality, and duty, approves the procedure of "forming a picture of a perfect aristocracy." "For," he says, "it is one of the most vital of all truths, that in a perfect state all the parts will be perfect; and that if the highest classes be as good as they can be, so also will be all the other classes."

To readers of the *New Republic* forty odd years ago this might have seemed part of the irony of the book, but now come Mr Mallock's *Memoirs* to show how far from ironical was his doctrine of aristocracy, and how firmly he believed in the most favoured classes as the nursery of that aristocracy. For forty years Mr Mallock has stood in the lists of controversy on the far right. In politics and political economy he has championed the principle of possession as the basis of society, and the extreme rights of the possessors, against Herbert Spencer, Henry George, Benjamin Kidd, and the socialists; in philosophy he has been a defender of an inspired, infallible, supernatural faith in God and immortality against Mr Frederic Harrison and the positivists, against Professor Huxley and the agnostics, against Professor Clifford and the materialists, against Matthew Arnold and Mrs Humphry Ward with their attenuated Christianity, and against Jowett, Maurice, Farrar, and the rationalism of the Broad Church. Against all these antagonists he has used the searching dialectic, the relentless irony, the trenchant style which made the *New Republic* a textbook of Oxford. And now he confesses that the pragmatic basis of the faiths which he espoused so generously and fought for so ardently is to be found in what has been believed "always, everywhere, and by all" the best people.

Mr Balfour, whose method Mr Mallock follows and with whose results he in general agrees, has made us familiar with the notion of "psychological climate." Mr Mallock's psychological climate was determined for him by his birth, one of "the Mallocks who have for nearly three hundred years been settled at Cockington Court," on which place he dwells with loving intimacy in the first chapter of his *Memoirs*. Here is to be found the explanation of William Hurrell Mallock, of what he was and was always to be, of what makes him a case so exemplary in the modern world. As Ruskin could

say that he went down from the garden-terrace of Schaffhausen with his destiny fixed "in all of it that was to be sacred and useful," so Mallock speaks of the landscape of Devonshire.

"The feelings excited by a landscape such as this bore a subtle resemblance to those produced in myself by the heraldrics which thronged the church. From the windows, indeed, of all the houses of which I have just been speaking the prospect was morally, if not visually, the same. They all looked out, as though it were the unquestioned order of things, on wooded seclusions pricked by manorial chimneys or on lodges and grey park walls, while somewhere beyond these last lurked the thatch of contented cottages, at the doors of which, when a member of the 'family' passed, women and children would curtsy and men touch their forelocks."

His early education was at the hands of the Rev. W. B. Philpot, ("a favourite pupil of Doctor Arnold's at Rugby, an intimate friend of Tennyson's") whose vague democratic and latitudinarian opinions inspired Mallock with his first contempt for liberalism, political and religious. From Dr Philpot, Mallock went to Oxford, then in a progressive mood of reaction against the Tractarians, and to Balliol, under Jowett the stronghold of the modernists. The effect on him is stated in his own words:

"Thus, in whatever direction I turned, I felt that, if I listened to the reasoning of liberal Oxford, I was confronted with an absurdity of one kind or another. Of the only liberal answers attempted to the riddle of life, not one, it seemed to me, would bear a moment's serious criticism; and yet, unless the orthodox doctrines could be defended in such a way that in all their traditional strictness they could once more compel assent, life, in the higher sense of the word, would—such was my conviction—soon cease to be tolerable."

It was in London that Mallock found the environment which confirmed him in his already determined course. He went there from Oxford with a reputation for cleverness, with a vast social connection, and with nothing to do but make himself at home. He did so. The London society of the 'seventies "coincided," he says,

"with what in the country, I had known and accepted, when a child, as part of the order of Nature."

Such a society is the fundamental concept in Mr Mallock's world. To preserve its economic and social basis he wrote his monographs, *Aristocracy and Evolution*, *The Limits of Pure Democracy*, *Labour and the Popular Welfare*, and *Social Equality*. He dealt with these subjects in a massive style which frightened the Conservative Committees on Parliamentary seats, but he loyally schooled their candidates and prepared vast compilations of statistics for the use of less informed speakers. His economic position is stated in the *Memoirs* with pragmatic frankness. The only way in which the economic production of a population can be increased is by "the intellectual direction of the super-capable few," and to induce these few to function society must offer the utmost in material reward and social prestige. "It would be easier to make men Trappists than to make them Socialists."

In the limited world of London he found a portal to an inner society, still more intimate and distinguished. Shortly after his arrival he arranged to share a suite of rooms with two Catholic friends "who had access to the world of Catholic gaiety," to which Mallock was admitted, and in which he confesses he found himself most at home. He was the only non-Catholic at a great luncheon party given by Lord Bute, the original of Lothair in Beaconsfield's novel, in honour of Cardinal Manning. To defend the faith which was the basis of this delightful exclusiveness he intervened in the controversy between Dr Wace and Professor Huxley, with his trenchant article, *Cowardly Agnosticism*. He asserted the same position in the *Reconstruction of Belief*, *Religion as a Credible Doctrine*, and *The Veil of the Temple*. In seeking the basis of religious as of social belief he is frankly a pragmatist looking steadily to the sanction of society, and naturally to the best society.

The true force of Mr Mallock's apologia lies not in these general positions but in the wealth of detail by which he shows society, as he knew it, interesting and worth preserving; just as the exquisite Epicureanism of *The New Republic* is the best reason for accepting a religion which would justify it. Mr Mallock knew many charming people and remembers them in their charm—Lord Houghton, Lord Lytton, Augustus Savile, Hamilton Aidé, Wilfrid Blunt, Alfred Montgomery. Of this world the women are still more note-

worthy, of whom Mallock distinguishes three—Constance, Duchess of Westminster, Caroline, Duchess of Montrose, and the Duchess of Somerset “remarkable for the peculiar magic of their voices and for a peculiar sense of humour which their voices managed to indicate,” past mistresses of the nuances by which social intercourse becomes a sort of music. Of country houses Mr Mallock was a connoisseur and a collector. Country house society in its intimacy reminds Mr Mallock of Catholic society in London. “Everybody here not only knew everybody else, but had known them, or had at least known about them, always.” It is with a certain engaging naïveté that he confesses that of his serious work he did a large part in country houses, and adds “the fact that society was never very far away I have usually felt as a stimulus, and very rarely as a disturbance.”

By a coincidence which Mr Mallock thinks worthy of note it was at Ardverikie where he had first embarked on a serious study of social problems that he received an invitation to present his view of them to American audiences. The invitation came from the Civic Federation, and under the management of the “distinguished secretary,” Mr Easley, Mr Mallock was provided with “congregations of the educated classes only” at Columbia, Harvard, Chicago, Pennsylvania, and Johns Hopkins; and meanwhile enjoyed so many “social amenities” that, as he kindly says, he could hardly tell whether he was in New York or London. At all events, he found his true psychological climate. Lunching at Mrs John Jacob Astor’s he might have been in Grosvenor Place and so might half the company. He found himself sitting by “Mrs Hwfa Williams, and opposite was Monsignor Vay di Vaya “who, when I last saw him, had been winding wool in the Highlands for Mrs Bradley Martin.” Mr Mallock’s appreciation of American society is written in the simple good faith which characterizes the *Memoirs* as a whole, and we look in vain for any trace of condescension, even though his chief contact with thought was through Nicholas Murray Butler, with wit through Mrs Stuyvesant Fish, and with political activity through Roosevelt. His touching reference to a clergyman whose congregation “had the honour of comprising Mr J. Pierpont Morgan” is convincing testimony to the texture of Mr Mallock’s social faith as strong to survive a transplantation. If one suspects the ironist of the *New Republic* let him read this: “Why

the temperament of one place should differ from that at another it is not easy to say, but at Philadelphia I was not only listened to without question, but at every salient point I was greeted with uproarious applause." Philadelphian applause was the high point of Mr Mallock's visit, and it is perhaps best to take leave of him as he basks in it, convinced that always and everywhere in the society of the best people it is possible to keep alive one's faith in a best of all possible worlds.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT



## A VICTORIAN LADY

MARGOT ASQUITH. *An Autobiography. Two volumes. Illustrated. 8vo. 558 pages. George H. Doran Company. New York.*

**B**LESSED with a father who had a mind of his own and a mother who had not, Margot Tennant, one of twelve, entered this world with a "Here's me!" And through these five hundred and fifty pages its "Here's me!" all the way. But that is as it should be: that is what autobiography means. We can read about Home Rule Bills in several other places.

The years have rubbed off none of the satisfaction with which in her nursery days Mrs Asquith heard her injured brother assert "You are more like lions than sisters!" As to herself the brother was a little more than half right. If you can more or less measure a man's wisdom by the things he knows—dates and percentage-tables aside—you can gauge far better what is far more important, his character, by the things he doesn't. In this pelting age slashes in one's knowledge are as honourable as were of old time slashes in one's face. In extremely early youth Mrs Asquith discovered she was bad at sums, "and from that day to this I have never added a single row of figures." Apart from a body's ignorance, the only other legitimate test of character is that body's literary style. I am not aware of any other writer who has so well described the appearance of the coat of a dark chestnut horse as does Mrs Asquith when she likens it to "the back of a violin." "All that was fast, furious and fashionable" is so topping a phrase that, as is the way with good phrases, it makes one question whether one has not heard it before. Of her wise friend, the Master of Balliol, when he tried on her that wise gesture of incontinently going dumb, Mrs Asquith remarks, "Something had switched him off as if he had been the electric light." Of those "common, shrewd men" among whom her father was "thrown from his earliest days" (though, like his daughter, blessed with a superabundance of ability to take care of himself) Mrs Asquith observes they were "most of them not only on the make but I might almost say on the pounce." It has been



held against Mrs Asquith that she wrote her autobiography before breakfast in bed: following Lincoln I wish certain of her critics could be supplied with that brand of bed.

It was into the drawing-room of Victorian empire that with her "Here's me!" Margot Tennant plumped.

"The Sunday class I taught need have disturbed no one, for I regret to relate that, after a striking lesson on the birth of Christ, when I asked my pupils who the Virgin was, one of the most promising said:

"'Queen Victoria!'"

We had thought the Christian religion in making of a Virgin a mother had gone pretty far: to make of her a grandmother was left to the British Empire. But the Virgin is not the only one to suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange. Mrs Asquith appears to have taken out to dinner more than once Lord Randolph Churchill and that bad and petulant boy is here exhibited above the illuminating motto, "Randolphus Africanus." Imperialists too, as Al Jolson would say, must have their moments.

But in these days there flourished in England a name more epiphanal than that of Queen Victoria, a name more consular than that of Randolph Churchill. We here pluck out the pride of the bag.

"Margot: . . . And I know Mr Gladstone too!

Arthur Walter: What a fortunate young lady!"

"On Saturday, 29th May, 1886, Mr and Mrs Gladstone came to pay us a visit at 40 Grosvenor Square." Margot and her family entertaining at tea Mr Gladstone and his "Aunt Pussy" present a spectacle which, if a trifle reminiscent of Alice, the March Hare, the Mad Hatter, and the Dormouse, is not for that reason the less engaging. Mr Gladstone went so far as to assert he had "regretted all his life having missed the opportunity of knowing Sir Walter Scott, Dr Arnold, and Lord Melbourne. . . . 'Tories have no hope, no faith,' he continued . . . 'and there is surely a silent lesson to be learnt from the tombstone.'"

"The March Hare took the watch and looked at it gloomily;

then he dipped it into his cup of tea, and looked at it again: but he could think of nothing better to say than his first remark. 'It was the *best* butter, you know.'

Yes, and on December 17th, 1889, that "dear and honoured" one underwent the fructifying experience of inspiration and brought forth a poem of four stanzas which, by demonstrating four rhymes to Margot, "emphasizes" the "uncommon genius" of the poet. I refrain from giving the poem entire only because I know my readers will want to try to dig out for themselves as many of those rhymes as their varied intelligence will permit. There are in these volumes fourteen other poems which to my mind are not a whit less *genialisch*. From the pen of Lord Curzon let me cite, by way of example, a poem which unreels thirty corruscating stanzas. Would all this not go to indicate that William Gladstone, like William Shakespeare, was not so much a lonely peak as we had fancied him? Should we not look upon him rather as one of a nest of singing birds? Mrs Asquith furnishes us with a photograph of him, showing his umbrella, his dignity, and, appropriately enough, a book. Himself rather of an old lioness, it is not surprising that he and the Tennant whelp so halcyonly hit it off.

"She asked me what I was most interested in after hunting and I said politics." When a woman rides as well as does Mrs Asquith, it is but natural that among the concerns of this world she should rate hunting first. But, as Aristotle long ago determined, man remains primarily a political, not a fox-hunting, animal. In the ideal state, we may be sure, not only the fox-hunting, but also the politics will be "fast, furious and fashionable." In England politics have been fashionable for several years and that is why, I suppose, the sun never sets upon the British flag. But in speed and fury these English politics leave much to be desired. Mrs Asquith speaks as though she and her sister Souls were the only hostesses to bring together statesmen of opposing camps. But of course that celestially chatty relationship had, long before her avatar, already distinguished the politics of England from those of the Continent. One is not astonished to find so naïve a lady as Margot Asquith recording this tea-time reciprocity as an all-white virtue. And in itself so it is. Given two statesmen of opposed political ideals, the more these men can be brought together for

rational conversation and the mutually beneficial denting which occasionally results therefrom, the better. But this pre-eminent virtue of English politics, like so many other accepted virtues, is but the unimportant reverse of an important vice. The reason these hard-headed and smooth-fingered bosses of empire let little magpies like Margot Asquith teach them to "play pencil-games" and the other after-dinner exercises which their hostesses may deem "inspiring," the reason why a "great Liberal statesman" is willing to nibble the same macaroon with "a damned Tory," is plain as a barn door. In his heart of hearts (and that is where macaroons go) each champion jolly well knows the other fellow is "a decent sort," in other words, that he will play cricket, in other words, that to the established order he is loyal. Of course these statesmen themselves are never aware of this: they are English gentlemen and no English gentleman is ever aware of what his heart of hearts knows.

But how do they get away with it? Aristotle also pointed out, rather unnecessarily, that in the practical world each event is the result of impossibly innumerable causes. But the nose of the matter remains obvious. Of that tight island "the resident aristocracy" swing the one empire that is big enough emotionally to count. And they make it count for every drop that is in it. Therewith they heat up the multitudinously anaemic dispossessed and therewith they ensure these latter shall continue to kick themselves downstairs, and quietly. But this is *vieille chanson*.

Let us return to the people who matter and among whom, incidentally, Margot Asquith has been accustomed to eat her strawberries and cream. A man's knowledge of and sympathy with those whom he governs is tremendously dependent on such irrelevant facts as the numbers of those governed, the acres they inhabit, and the temples wherein they congregate. Lord Randolph Churchill, for all his great big roaring heart and despite the most Christian of intentions and of sisters, could not conceivably feel for and into the Masai of Africa quite as he could have, had they subsisted on something more English than raw blood. And in India and in Ireland there are other tastes quite as far without the imagination of a Churchill. So the Christian conscience will not this time save from boredom. Yet the same imperial idea, impotent though it be to excite among the rulers intelligent animosity, acts upon their heads no less potently than upon those less polished. The

big guns and the big flags and the big ships induce a grateful nystagmus: the affairs of London and of Manchester shrink to a wee pettiness, and the game is up.

All this is merely to explain why Mrs Asquith had such successful dinners. Her guests had not strong enough heads to keep their eyes on that Manchester about which they might really have cared enough to knock each other healthily down: the heady fumes of empire had tamed the savage breast. These fumes themselves, on the other hand, were easily worked off in pompous oratory, top hats, and The Diamond Jubilee. Revolutions, martyrdoms, assassinations—on the Continent they all flourished. But the Anglo-Saxon, pursued by his indefatigable fate, was here again, as the reward of his native hardihood, worldly luck, and great possessions, from healthy passion willy-nilly cut off.

To inhibitions such as these we must trace that gross, appalling atmosphere of a great public-school which at length swallowed what was once Merry England. Practically, empire is the best of all forms of government; aesthetically it is the most intoxicating; morally it is the most noxious. And morally Mrs Asquith and Mr Gladstone paid. A pinch more of the leonine in their *ήθους* and like Lord Byron they might have kept their integrity. Then too, there is always laudanum and there is always Dostoevsky. But Mrs Asquith, like Mr Gladstone, went wrong more commonly and more repulsively: after that most delectable of teas, Margot drove him back to 10 Downing Street, went home and wrote in her diary: "perhaps it was the light of the setting sun, or the wind, or perhaps something else, but my eyes were full of tears." Shoo! Mrs Asquith. Whatsoever brought those tears, surely *you* were not the girl not to know! With the gay sliding of these morally unfocused years, this false feeling, this sick sentimentality, this moral degeneration, has so obscenely waxed and so abominably multiplied that to-day Mrs Asquith can write (and publish) the ensuing sentence:

"If ever I were to be as unhappy again as I was there, I would fly to the shelter of those Rackham Woods, seek isolation on those curving coasts where the gulls shriek and dive and be ultimately healed by the beauty of the anchored seas which bear their islands like the Christ Child on their breasts."

But let us veil our heads and turn aside—for one time this woman, even she, was called, and with some show of reason, a lioness.

In a characteristic passage from which we learn that King Edward VII was more "touchy" than the present incumbent, Margot tells us how at Ascot she picked a winner. And indeed no inhibition could kill that Tennant instinct for the main chance. In affairs of the heart Mrs Asquith gives herself out to be "a very old hand."

"When Henry told me he cared for me that unstifled inner voice which we all of us hear more or less indistinctly told me I would be untrue to myself and quite unworthy of life if, when such a man came knocking at the door, I did not fling it wide open."

I suppose the best criterion of old-handship in any business remains the "inner voice": when its reaction to emergency is immediate and automatic, then the possessor becomes "an old hand." *In re* Peter Flower, *mum* was the word. The inner voices of prominent Victorians were extraordinarily dependable; they were, to use an inappropriate language, *bien documentées*. This was the quality by virtue of which they so patly chimed with more negotiable things. Mr Gladstone, being wise, was an intransigent moralist; he was also, being wise, an intransigent opportunist. So—like the glancing ball upon the fountain and no less unconsciously—this Victorian lady has contrived immortally to bob, at once in the sunlight and in the splash.

But of course the really interesting thing about Mrs Asquith's book is the indignant miaowing of those who none the less lap it up. They quote her own words against herself, "Reticence should guard the soul and only those who have compassion should be admitted to the shrine." They do not seem aware that the smug theatricality of this phrasing is far worse than any breach of reticence could ever be. But let us quote a different passage—for this autobiography, like the Bible, can furnish more texts than one—and this time for the defence. During "the first scene in my life," when hard-pressed by the jealous Mrs Bo, our heroine deployed, strategically, this observation: "However, every one has a different idea of what is right and wrong . . ." But to penetrating moralists like Mr Savonarola Hackett such a sentiment as this can only serve lamentably to establish what he has already publicly

stated, namely, that Mrs Asquith lacks "spiritual pellucidity" and that she "had no chance to be seriously educated." But I can't help being sorry for the lady none the less. So uncanonical of me. Though *The New Republic* number its readers in the tens of thousands, shall not ginger be hot i' the mouth?

But quite apart from the just denunciations of these moralists, there seems to be about a very general and genuine bitterness against Mrs Asquith. Of course there was the war and of course everyone knows how the wife of England's Premier was gloriously snubbed. But that war is over. Poor Mrs Asquith is paying for a different war and for one her friends will not win. Where you have empire you have classes, and where you have classes you have class-loyalty, and a great many people are much fluttered lest her frankness may have given away the show. That's what comes of having a lower class; it's as bad as having a servant: one has to drop one's voice. I take off my hat to a lady who didn't.

SCOFIELD THAYER



## BRIEFER MENTION

**YOUTH AND THE BRIGHT MEDUSA**, by Willa Cather (12mo, 303 pages; Knopf). Perhaps the striking interest, the catch charm of Miss Cather's stories lies in the fact that they take us behind scenes with the sort of person generally revealed to us only in Sunday supplement articles. The "bright Medusa" is art, and in six of these eight stories, including some of her earliest and of her most recent work, it is of the art of music and of its votaries she writes. Not romantic pictures of the great women of the opera, they seem an informed appraisal, cold, cut cameo-like against a blank background of experience. In itself almost a trick, this stark treatment of the most emblazoned persons of our world is at once intriguing and disturbing. Sifted by such scrupulous analysis the residue comes through too completely cerebral to be quite comprehended in a sentimental world. As studies of success, of the successful, of the victims of "big careers," as simply of ambition, above all of the quality of ambition in women, they probably are not surpassed; but a coldness, a minimizing of the emotional element, even in an emotional situation—perhaps essentially lacking in such people, it can be argued—will disappoint and baffle the public which greedily seeks the story—only the story.

**BLIND**, by Ernest Poole (12mo, 416 pages; Macmillan). A carefully concealed *roman à thèse*. The book is constructed along the lines of an honest symbolism: the hero is blind, for instance, as our age is blind; in the dark, with the aid of his typewriter, he recovers his impressions of the last forty years, focusing on the economic upheavals precipitated by the war. On the whole, it is newspaper correspondence worked into the shape of a novel. The parts dealing with Russia immediately after the fall of the Czar are especially interesting. The blind writer is susceptible to all the human forces of the conflict, sympathizing vacillatorily with Times-o-phobic Red as well as with hundred-percentism. And Mr Poole makes his final plea by having his unmistakable American marry the widow of the German chemist who perfected gas.

**THE STORY OF GOTTON CONNIXLOO**, and **FORGOTTEN**, by Camille Mayran (12mo, 160 pages; Dutton), are two cameos carved from the tusks of war by a knife which might easily have dropped from the hand of Jens Peter Jacobsen. As delicate as two brooches, they are as appealing to the heart as they are fragile to the eye. Set in English by Van Wyck Brooks they constitute an unusual ornament to the library of Franco-American literature.

**LIFE**, by Johan Bojer (12mo, 339 pages; Moffat Yard), peoples a broad canvas with feverish figures, and handles its theme in a more sophisticated key than most of the preceding Bojer. A restless civilization is silhouetted against the eternal whiteness and bleakness of the north—a dazzling, if to alien eyes distorted, effect.



**THE PEOPLE OF THE RUINS**, by Edward Shanks (12mo, 314 pages; Stokes).

This novel has the abandon of a Jules Verne romance, the terror and excitement of a Nick Carter tale, and the ultimate literary claims of a Münchhausen invention. But the author writes entertainingly, imaginatively, and with a creative skill that makes his work pleasant if not nutritious reading.

**THE ROMANTIC WOMAN**, by Mary Borden (12mo, 347 pages; Knopf),

holds the thread of interest to the end of a very tangled skein. Shrewd character drawing, fidelity to types, and vigour in narration are here in good measure, though occasionally the writer forces the situation beyond the boundary of literary discretion, and indulges an almost paperback fling.

**SARA VIDEBECK AND THE CHAPEL**, by C. J. L. Almquist, translated by

Adolph Burnett Benson (12mo, 229 pages; American Scandinavian Foundation, New York), are two simple stories by a Swede who lived in America during Civil War days. Into their characteristic Scandinavian simplicity and mysticism are woven threads of Southern thought and feeling—Rousseauism, for instance, which here gives a quaintly archaic pattern to the individualism of the North. But Sara Videbeck, whose story was published and destroyed in 1838, is at the same time quaintly modern in her matter-of-factness about marriage and sex.

**LETTERS OF A JAVANESE PRINCESS**, by Raden Adjeng Kartini, translated from

the Dutch by Agnes L. Symmers (8vo, 310 pages; Knopf). Kartini, a Javanese of noble birth, was the first native Javanese to feel the European current of emancipation. These letters are the daily register of her strengthening convictions, her growing ability to deny the rigid and arbitrary customs of her people. Rooted in a tradition of the cloistering of women, she fought especially for the social freedom of women. Perhaps the greatest thing in her favour is that, as much as the worship of the shibboleth was in her blood, she did not blindly supplant the shibboleth of native practices with the shibboleth of European practices. On account of her excessive handicaps, however, her grasp of expression is by no means unusual; and as a result, the book is more valuable historically than as a piece of literature.

**IN MOROCCO**, by Edith Wharton (8vo, 290 pages; Scribner), adds another

swiftly-told, graceful, vivid, and yet informative travel book to Mrs Wharton's globe-trotting shelf. She has caught Morocco in a mood which its after-the-war exploitation will efface for ever, and the descriptive narrative is particularly welcome on that account. Mrs Wharton may be the tourist, but she is never that baleful monologist—the sightseer.

**AMERICAN TOWNS AND PEOPLE**, by Harrison Rhodes (Illus., 12mo, 274

pages; McBride), has its classic prototype in Henry James's *The American Scene*, but it is a version highly journalized and simplified, intended not so much to interpret as to amuse. In this doubtless quite as important capacity, it for the most part succeeds admirably, only at times seeming a little fatuous, a little too effusive, a bit bland perhaps.

**SHADOW-SHAPES**, by Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant (12mo, 237 pages; Houghton Mifflin), discloses an effective mingling of personal impressions in France with bits of description and snatches of vivid scenes, all penned with a staccato intensity which admirably reflects the sensitive reactions of convalescence. The book derives a unity from its synthesis of fragments—a shade too clinical at times, but otherwise sharply realistic and delicately expressed.

**EVERYDAY AMERICANS**, by Henry Seidel Canby (8vo, 183 pages; Century), casts a trial balance of current prejudices and possible ideals, as they are reflected in the prevailing type of citizenship. Accepting the "finished product of bourgeois life in America—the middle class incarnate" as the measure of what we are, the author runs an appraising eye over our intellectual, religious, and literary life, and then withdraws without computing the total. A timely, undogmatic contribution to an exceedingly lively issue.

**THE ANTHOLOGY OF ANOTHER TOWN**, by E. W. Howe (12mo, 181 pages; Knopf), consists of backyard gossip about the inhabitants of Atchison, Kansas; as such it is unexpurgated and entirely delightful. Naturally it invites comparison with the more famous anthology which preceded it. There are biographies in the first part of Spoon River which could be written out as prose and inserted in this volume without seeming out of place. On the other hand Mr Howe does not adulterate his gossip with mysticism; he is not so cosmic as Mr Masters and he is a great deal easier to read.

**PREJUDICES: Second Series**, by H. L. Mencken (12mo, 254 pages; Knopf), might be conceived as an allegory based on a great American epic. Eliza, the fugitive slave of American literature, with her child, Puritanism, held tight in her arms, is hotly pursued by the Mencken bloodhounds of vitriolic scorn and aristocratic anger. Just as they are about to tear the infant from her grasp, Eliza leaps upon the artificial ice of academic critical approval, and is—temporarily, at least—saved. Doubtless the exhilarating chase will be resumed in *Prejudices: Third Series*.

**THE ART OF BIOGRAPHY**, by William Roscoe Thayer (12mo, 155 pages; Scribner), embodies a scholarly, illuminating survey of a theme which never grows stale. The author views the entire field of biographical literature, with considerable critical comment on modern work in its historical relations.

**SATAN THE WASTER**, by Vernon Lee (12mo, 350 pages; Lane), is described on the jacket as "a philosophic war drama." Since its philosophy is somewhat melodramatic and its drama somewhat discursively philosophic, it scarcely can be termed a war play. Furnished with copious notes and a lengthy prolegomenon it is an interesting discussion of our international imbecilities and sets forth with pomp those precise opinions whose less elegant expression recently sent several hundred Americans to jail. Mr Bernard Shaw has given the book high praise.

**THE BLACK COUNTRY**, A Book of Twenty Drawings, by Edward Wadsworth (4 to, The Ovid Press, London), is introduced by Arnold Bennett with a dextrous flippancy that scarcely fits the stern beauty of the plates. Slag-heaps, blast furnaces, steel mills, subject-matter so tempting to illustration, are converted by Wadsworth into the pure art of dramatic design; indeed, so far as representation is concerned, the fuliginous squalor of *The Black Country* might as well denote the slag-heaps of hell. The artist, a cubist by method, is a master of precise line; his abstractions are never allowed to destroy the graphic idea; many lines are used but each is clearly bound to the objective forms. Sometimes the masses stand out of the drawings like concretions, but as a whole the design is unbroken and powerful.

**MOONS OF GRANDEUR**, by William Rose Benét (12mo, 176 pages; Doran), embodies some of the best work of a poet who seldom strays far from the fonts of genuine inspiration. Mr Benét's favoured themes are romantic, and he has the faculty of investing them with feeling and colour and verve, through the competent exercise of an authentic talent. His verses are refreshingly free from pose; they are light and firm in texture.

**THE JUNK-MAN**, and Other Poems, by Richard Le Gallienne (12mo, 243 pages; Doubleday, Page). One of the outstanding qualities of Mr Le Gallienne's verse, and one hardest to understand when one considers that he is by nature a globe-trotter and cosmopolitan, is his fixed, romantic opposition to life and its shaded meanings. In *The Ballade of Pessimists*, in the earlier part of his book, he consigns dreamers, poets, and thinkers of the type of Nietzsche, Freud, Poe, Remy De Gourmont, and D'Annunzio to Hades and suggests rat-poison as a cure for their spiritual *malaise*. It is consoling to know that the next generation, as well as those that follow, will not find it necessary to do the like for the author of *The Junkman*. Facile charm that is safely mummified can do neither weal nor woe to the spirit of art or life.

**HISPANIC ANTHOLOGY** of poems translated from the Spanish, collected by Thomas Walsh (16mo, 779 pages; Putnam), is a valuable book not alone for its well-arranged collection of poems, but for the fine reproductions of famous portraits and for the biographical notes. The poems themselves have not always been happily translated and have, no doubt, lost much of their music in coming out of the Spanish. Except for the old ballads, the most interesting and beautiful of the poems are the work of the modernists. They seem to have made no violent break with the older poets, but their work has far greater freedom of form and imagery, and a certain natural, earthy beauty that is very delightful.

In **THE SUPERSTITION OF DIVORCE** (12mo, 150 pages; Lane), Mr G. K. Chesterton maintains that the Catholic Christian teaching is historically and socially justified. To encourage divorce and re-marriage is to destroy the normal in favour of the abnormal and will result in economic slavery as the family disappears. Mr Chesterton thinks clearly and his style jolts one, almost, into agreement.

## MODERN ART

IT was said of Marsden Hartley when he first exhibited a tendency to apply paint in mosaic-like touches to the canvas—and it was Mr Stieglitz who said it—that this inclination was spontaneous and had occurred in some remote country place in New England far from the influences of Paris. The information was conveyed through a muted larynx—Mr Stieglitz was truly noble in the aid he gave to young painters—and the impression was given to sympathetic hearers that supernatural agencies were at work here and there seeking favouring “controls” through whom the various manifestations that had already excited so much comment in Paris—and were later to be known as “Modern Art”—might be vindicated.

Another “control” was Maurice Sterne who exposed the painted records of his sojourn among the South Sea Islanders at the Berlin Photographic Gallery and who had been subjected to a *plus forte que moi* influence whilst at Bala. Maurice had never seen the paintings of Cézanne, so Mr Birnbaum told the late Sir William Van Horne, and Sir William admitted that to his mind Maurice’s pictures vindicated Cézanne completely—and in fact, he preferred them to Cézanne’s. Cézanne had only imposed his palette and his lines for tree forms and hills upon Mr Sterne, the latter refusing to surrender his classic ideas of the figure to the dead man from Aix; or perhaps the spectral Cézanne admired them too much to wish to have them changed, since he did himself at one time try to draw like Bouguereau, as nearly as he could, and Mr Sterne knows far more of the figure as it is, than Bouguereau ever did.

But the question of vindications or influences is interesting only as we begin the progress towards the stage where we do our own imposing, a stage not near, as yet, since we have no dead Cézannes and Rousseaux, nor live Matisse and Picassos, to compel the hordes to yield to their fashions. We do have one, Marcel Duchamp, who speaks a language strictly his own, and who charms immensely a somewhat private circle—but it is not certain as yet whether Marcel is really ours or merely a loan from France, and it might be unseemly for us to brag of him. In the mean time, we

begin to have a respectable list of artists whom we do own who play the modern game and who tend to make us forget the work of other celebrities. Among these is Mr Stieglitz's Marsden Hartley, who stood out well with a group of floral panels in a recent international show at the Société Anonyme; Charles Demuth, whose watercolours at the Daniel Galleries proved one of the important exhibitions of the season; John Marin; Max Weber; Man Ray; Abram Walkowitz; Charles Sheeler; Joseph Stella; and the Zorachs.

Charles Demuth as an artist grows in strength if not in gaiety. When in Paris he read Zola, and possibly Balzac, and in the student days before the war there was still enough romantic glamour hanging over all the various classes of ladies vaguely known as "professional" to invest them with appreciable worth as material to an ardent student, and so Mr Demuth came back to us laden with drawings of circus riders and music hall singers, somewhat *à la* Toulouse-Lautrec. It seemed as though we were about to have a new caricaturist, but Mr Demuth had scarcely unpacked his boxes and ensconced himself in a studio than a change came o'er the face of his dream. Professional ladies in America are obliged to live so furtively and without glamour that even the most willing artists are powerless to aid them. Mr Demuth saw that they were fitter subjects for pathological research than caricature—and gave them up. He may still be a caricaturist, but if so, he laughs at our architecture, rather than at our ladies. His themes have been found in Pennsylvania and in New England, and not even Hawthorne has been so painstaking with gables as has Mr Demuth. He draws the sharp clean line of our souvenirs of Sir Christopher Wren with an intensity that suggests an inward rage. When a modern mill, with its lofty smoke-stacks and concrete-and-iron walls, falls within his vision, there is no doubt whatever that one side of Mr Demuth's nature is up in arms—but *que voulez-vous?*—the other side of him is pure artist, and the result, in spite of the concrete, is beautiful. The Coatesville Steel Mill is one of the most important pictures in modern American art, and the town of Coatesville in Pennsylvania, which once burnt a nigger odiously at a stake, now has a more worthy claim to fame, thanks to the fact of an artist having chanced that way.

The Folsom Galleries took the plunge with the exhibition of John Storr's work, and with commendable results, if many visitors and much publicity be thought commendable. Mr Storrs is a young man, at the threshold of his career, who has travelled much, experimented much—all in the modern way—and who succeeds to the extent that he arouses expectations. He exposed sculptures, drawings, and wood-cuts; his surest work, the prints. He has not shaken clear of the "influences," as yet, the most marked impress upon his style suggesting the late Secessionist business in Vienna, but doubtless the general kindness that was meted out to him at his *début*, will go far towards enabling him to find his true bearings. For a good deal of this kindness, he may thank his wife. This lady, a Frenchwoman who wrote under the name of Mme Debrol, supplied an "appreciation" of her husband for the catalogue, which had a *succès fou*. Perhaps appreciation is a mild word, Mrs Storrs clearly being an enthusiast upon the subject. A few of her sentences, roughly translated, give an idea of her style. *Ecoutez*;

"My husband is an artist. He escapes then all definition. He is sculptor, designer, engraver, architect, poet, dreamer; he is a chameleon. He changes humour with the light and under inspiration is like a drop of water in the sunlight. His soul takes on all the little differences of the air—his soul is like the *robe de Peau d'Ane*, colour of the weather. He is as gay as an infant playing in a flowering orchard of a spring morning—on certain days; on others he is as thoughtful and reserved as a chapel where but a single candle burns. He is charming, irritable, nervous, sensitive, taciturn, exuberant, insupportable, adorable, indefinable—he is an artist."

Everyone was enchanted with Mrs Storrs' little effort. Frank, free writing like that is rare in exhibition catalogues, and the art set decided with remarkable unanimity that two desirable additions had been made to their list of acquaintances.

HENRY MCBRIDE



## MUSICAL CHRONICLE

### AUDIENCES

THE audience of the first of the season's concerts by the Flonzaley Quartet expressed directly and flatly its dislike of the novelty performed, the Strawinsky Concertino. The traditional damnation with faintest applause, exclusion with low, quasi-hysterical guffawing, were superseded extensively by some, you know, un-Anglo-Saxon and Continental hissing, which increased in vehemence, drowning quite the laughter, when the members of the quartet made faintly as though to recommence the brief composition. The strong silent businessman, usually prompt only with his tears and his flapper-like exclamations of "oh, isn't that just *too* lovely," forgot for the nonce his timidity, and hissed. His sisters and his cousins and his aunts, ladies blonde, brunette, and grizzled, supported him with amazing alacrity, and sent forth in the direction of the platform where stood the embarrassed Flonzaleys, some long-drawn and remarkably sustained sibilations. Each row of stalls seated at least one individual who declared roundly to his approving entourage that "if he ever saw that composition announced on a programme again, he would stay away," and defied the musicians to do without his two dollars. Indeed, feathers stood dangerously ruffled, everyone looked "what the devil does Betti mean, anyway!" until the performers began making amends by watering the 1840 rosebuds of the Schumann a-major quartet, and left the audience to dream fondly, eyelids closed, lips parted, on grandmother's bridal wreath.

Something had been sharply, savagely relieved in the concertino. The fiddles had spoken bitterly: futility. They had spoken angrily: boredom; spoken: the joke of it all. The Strawinsky music is a drab, rasping, tired shuffle and breakdown. It is like a locomotive which has fallen off the track, making its wheels revolve in air. Rhythms prolong themselves out of sheer inertia; pound on, wearily. A lyric coda of a few measures, a sort of momentary illumination of a darkened landscape, breaks off into silence just as it begins to establish itself. Petruchka, seedier,



older, sullener, is on the boards again, dancing. Before the war his mad energy used to come out of him in forms of beauty. He threw himself against the walls of his prison in frenzied desire of release that was terrible and wonderful. But now, it comes out of him in ugly gestures; he no longer deems it worth his while striving for escape; he is grown vindictive. He dances—because he was born with his mind in his feet, and also, because he is hungry. But he loses interest in his dance long before his feet cease shuffling and beating; he asks himself bitterly "What's all this for?" while his feet continue for some reason to execute the movements, which become stupider and stupider. The machine continues of its proper momentum long after the meaning of its activity has been lost. At the end, Petrushka summons himself to speak. He wants to say something conclusive about life, to seize the spark of emotion which suddenly glints in him. He commences "Oh, Life!—," then stops short. There is so much to be said that it serves no end to speak. There is nothing to be said at all. Finis—the world for him. Finis—perhaps for all men. Finis—of a certainty, a civilization.

The concertino is a piece of post-armistice existence. It is a splinter of mirror in which there reflects itself sharply the disintegration of life in progress since the conclusion of the war. Stravinsky is an artist: he does not make things for the sake of making something beautiful, but in order that he may see the truth. He will see the truth, even though it prove the head of Medusa. Nothing else is worthy his effort. And this music for string quartet, all his recent works, the childish, half-idiotic songs as well as the concertino, express what he feels all thinking people to be. The music represents the quality of life in him, in sapient folk, the weariness, the dull indifference to a world whose machinery has refused all human control, and which is seen hurling them to destruction. The weight that depresses men to-day, and robs them of all but a modicum of desire, is not on them only because of the energy expended in war, because of the gigantic wastage of human and material resources done. It is not on them only because of the general bitter misery. The mortmain of weariness flung heavily on the bubbling bourn of life is but what men at all times have felt during the collapse of a civilization. Something like it the Greeks must have felt when their freedom was extinguished by the Macedonians and the

Romans; something like it must have been felt by the men who went to die in life in the Thebaid during the collapse of the Roman world. Life is once again seen, a flux of unrelated meaningless moments, none more important, more significant than another; the victories of the Alexanders, the thoughts of wise men, no more important than the squealing of swine in Pyrrho's farmyard. Of no matter the birth of a man; of no matter his death; no matter whether one persist or perish. It is, indeed, a sort of new pyrrhonism, the thing sapient folk, most of them, feel to-day. One sees it in the posthumous novel of Guillaume Apollinaire, with its mass of ludicrously unrelated detail; in the poetry of the *dadas*, studiously unselective; in the recent music of Strawinsky.

Certainly, the ugly, infinitely significant music of the concertino is of a piece with the lives of the folk who listened to it that evening in Aeolian Hall. The place was more a unit during the performance of the Strawinsky than it has almost ever been, at any other concert. Audience, performers, composition, the tasteless and vulgar decorations of the hall itself, were interwoven, interplaying, doing much the identical thing. A light had suddenly been cast from some secret source, illuminating cruelly matters till then half shadowed. The drabness, the weariness, the joylessness of the music seemed to proceed out of the hundreds packed, as they are packed evening after evening, into the rows of the seats. One perceived the players anew through the music, perceived the want of conviction, want of enthusiasm, in them. One perceived the audience, starkly, unforgettably. The fatigue, the flaccidity of the American public was relieved. Money one saw, food, complacent coiffures that said "Well, here we are!" But neither youth, nor eagerness, nor joy, nor resiliency, were visible. Wherever in the audience the eye rested, it saw dun, grey, whether it fell on yearless faces or on yeared. People were sitting; everything was sitting. Life was headless, lukewarm, weary from inaction, from inadequate action. One thought perforce of rubber bands from which all elasticity has passed. One saw what America does to young people, to old people. The modern conveniences, dentistry, plumbing, did not awaken respect during those few minutes. Life was what the music was—tired, inane, the weary revolutions of a machine no man can arrest.

And the audience hissed. It did its utmost to punish the musi-

cians who had dared offer them this work. It did its utmost to banish for ever the composition from the concert halls. Not that it had failed to see the implications of the music. On the contrary, it had felt them only too well. And for that reason, it sought to exclude it, to destroy it. The mechanism that makes the American public so hostile, so blind, to the contemporary artistic expressions, was at work in the audience again. The living artist comes to folk with the offer of a contact with the present. He comes to them with the truth of an experience, with the fact of what his life is, of what their own lives are. He comes to tell them what is at work in the world to-day, what the tenure of his own existence is, what is happening or about to happen to them. And that is precisely what our musical and artistic public does not wish to know. For the members of this public are largely persons who have money, who have gotten what they want of life, and therefore want nothing to change. They want their position of privilege maintained, they want nothing new to come into the world to threaten their power, they want to have obtained the "normalcy" which is their own masterhood. Nevertheless, new elements are continually coming into play in the world. For all their Hardingism, the ground is rapidly slipping away from underneath their feet. They themselves are being ruined by the cumbersome of an obsolete banking-system. The machine has refused their control, too. But, being too weak, too slothful, too tired to realize that life is a perpetual battle that goes only to him who never relaxes his watch, and that their sole means of defence lies just in foreseeing, in seeing as clearly as possible the state of the world, in viewing themselves as nakedly as they can, and thus preparing themselves, and strengthening their adjustment to the world, they elect to play the ostrich. They permit themselves to be persuaded that if they can but keep a thing from their consciousnesses, they will have abolished it. They refuse to open their eyes.

So they help rob the concert hall, the place that ought be nothing other than a bath of reality, of its lovely function. There are few musicians who will stand out against them in board meetings, few who will stand firm against signs of displeasure from audiences. There is always a courtesan in a virtuoso. And since nothing will get them the applause on which they feed except musical Mother Goose rhymes, Mother Goose it is that is performed.

For, after all, what is it that our audiences demand other than

"Ride a cock horse  
To Banbury Cross"

or

"Bye, Baby Bunting  
Daddy's gone a-hunting"?

What is it that they demand but compositions which have been heard so often that no edge remains to them, compositions in which there are no surprises, compositions which demand of the auditor no effort, no vivacity of imagination? All they ask, after all, is that they be not forced to think, to enlarge their experiences, to enter into another's mind. Symphonies are repeated with nauseating regularity, and excite applause infallibly. A sigh of relief issues from the house as some Fifth Symphony, Beethoven's, Tchaikowsky's, Dvorak's, is attacked. The listeners know that they will meet nothing unexpected, nothing novel, nothing difficult to apprehend, nothing that will make them stretch their brains. To be sure, were someone to appear on the platform and recite to them

"Mary, Mary,  
Quite contrary"

or

"Tom, Tom, the piper's son  
Stole a pig and away he run"

they would hiss, as they hissed Strawinsky. For the truth about themselves would be dangerously nigh to dawning upon them. But, when our "music-lovers" have before them Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra playing the musical equivalent for Mother Goose—the moron music of Dvorak's New World Symphony, with its dulled edges, its ignoble platitudes, its *largo* that might do rather nicely at the movies when the old darky dies on the film, its scherzo with its chorus of wealthy milkmaids—they sit in bliss, and rattle applause that is like salvos of artillery.

They do not appear to be in the least aware toward what it is that they are at the very moment, stretching out their throats.

PAUL ROSENFELD

## THE THEATRE

**I**T is always pleasant to surrender to a charm so definite, so distinct as that of Miss Lotus Robb who has been discovered as the perfect *ingénue* for Miss Clare Kummer's comedies. But in ROLLO'S WILD OAT the pleasure was perforce secondary since this play restored to the English-speaking stage the high and subtle talents of Mr Roland Young after a Babylonish captivity in BUDDIES and such like Hobartian twaddle.

Mr Young's is by all odds the freshest intelligence active in our theatre of comedy and in this play it is joined to another talent equally rare and equally precious, that of Miss Kummer. The peculiar airiness and frivolity with which Miss Kummer treats comedy is a bit startling to our dramatists who work so hard at it. They very properly accuse her work of being thin, but they forget that in comparison with shoddy, silk is thin; and the clean, soft, and sheer silkiness of Miss Kummer's happiness they cannot even imitate.

G. S.

ALL right-minded people keep in their hearts a particularly soft place for Paris, Pierrots, and the 1830's, while in Mr Belasco we cherish, luckily, so eminently right-minded a producer as himself to be not unaware of this fact. Mr Belasco has brought to us the really rather sensitive child of Sacha Guitry, first, *bien entendu*, having had the boy to London and there fitted out with a Granville Barker suit (Eton collar, chestnut-curls, Eton jacket, et cetera). This introduction of the little fellow to the good people of New York is gone through with firmly and squarely: in the end a very vigorous Belasco light ensures against misunderstanding. The play is pretty if ineffective; the rhymed translation is amusingly hit-or-miss and, like all Mr Barker's work, somewhat rococo and somewhat cute. In the chief female part, that of Marie Duplessis, Elsie MacKay goes a long way toward proving she cannot act: under Mr Ziegfeld or Mr Tappé she might discover a vocation. Rose Coghlan as Madame Rabouin plays with gusto and competence. As Deburau Lionel Atwill is blatantly miscast. Anyone who had seen him act

Ibsen should have known him to be the last man to take the part of a Pierrot. As an interpreter of the moral disintegration of Hjalmar Ekdal he was wholly expressive: as a Pierrot he is dumb in gesture as well as in voice both in and out of that costume. Self-conscious, as every man must be who plays a part he cannot live, he forgets and is himself only at the end of the third act. There the categorical imperative galvanizes to life. His erect stride across the stage, his geometrical handling of the cane, his finely rhetorical utterance of "I play to-night," these together organize a dramatic moment. Lionel Atwill as an interpreter of the moral and intellectual emotions remains admirable; but what is wanted here is a more Mediterranean, a more gesticulatory, a more suavely iridescent, a more watered-silk or John Barrymore type of actor. All of which Mr Belasco, had he been up to his job, would have known.

SALLY is a successful failure. There is no doubt but that the rather pretty Urban scenery, the rather pretty costumes, and the rather pretty music will keep the raft afloat; also there are altogether too many people who love Marilynn Miller. Leon Errol puts as much punch as one man can into a show that nevertheless succeeds in sticking baby pink and baby blue.

THE WINTER GARDEN appears to have bred a long line of heroes. In THE BROADWAY BREVITIES Eddie Cantor having tried and failed, in THE PASSING SHOW of 1921 it is Willie Howard who makes bold to impersonate The Great Al. Brash youth, he even ventures upon the sacred anguish of Mammy Chloe. These imitators put one in mind of Ossian: "They went forth to the war, but they always fell." The same Howard together with his brother and two adequate ladies present the Quartette from Rigoletto in that manner toward which as an ideal Grand Opera for ever tends. Sammy White with his rubber legs achieves, at moments, a Cummings drawing. There are also two men who commit the unpardonable impropriety of clogging without hats and two women who are so unhappy as to suggest underdone steak *Béarnaise*. Harry Watson deserves a better part: batted on the head, his face fluttered. Why does not somebody (not Mr Drinkwater) write a farce featuring Daniel Webster? I for one should pay well to see H. Watson spout that "indignant eloquence."

S. T.



## COMMENT

**I**N these columns, about a year ago, we fulfilled the prime function of a magazine when we gave our readers all the information necessary for making a fortune. How many of them profited by it we have no means of knowing, for readers and rich men are proverbially ungrateful. In any event we did not promise that they should become rich before ten years. Having done so much we felt at liberty to talk about art, for a little time.

It is now our duty to provide another severely practical excuse for our existence, and we make the following suggestion in the most practical spirit. There is money in it. Extant among us to-day are a number of poets who write verses grateful, in the Latin sense, to listeners. In his *Island of Paris* Mr Pound noted the French tendency to allow a poet to speak his verses, and the same amiable weakness is discernible among us. It has been capitalized, but only in the slovenly fashion suitable to poets. A few readings, a few recitations. It needs to be put into quantity production, it needs mechanics. And the mechanism exists. The phonograph which records Mr Kreisler's playing of his own compositions should not withhold a like service from Mr Vachel Lindsay and Miss Amy Lowell. We have heard a second-rate recitalist (*n'est-ce pas?*) do Annabel Lee on the phonograph and have wished that he (or we) hadn't. But we fancy that Poe conceivably could have done it superbly. And it would be a thousand pities if the intonations which we know to be immortal should be denied the lesser grace of becoming permanent. We have not consulted the poets named here, and we mention no others so as to avoid making invidious comparisons. For these two, at least, would be 12-inch records and sealed in the colour of eminence.

PERHAPS it is the result of the war; perhaps it is due to the decline of the classics as a prescribed study; perhaps it is only another instance of economic determinism; we do not know. What we do know is that loose thinking and ill logic and a sheer incapacity to use words in their simple meanings are apparently the only qualities required of a writer for the public prints. We recall, for ex-



ample, an editorial in a notable journal to the effect that since the Lilliputians had made peace with the Laputans and had only the Brobdingnagians to fight against, there was no excuse for the continued mobilization of the Lilliputian army (the names were different, but those we use are less provocative). We have before us a violent attack on the threatening censorship of plays which ends by embracing the horrid thing (an intelligent censorship, of course! a censorship which would forbid cheap and tawdry plays) as the possible saving grace of the American theatre. And finally, in the most pregnant instance of easy thinking we have seen in a long while, we have Miss Zona Gale openly, publicly in the *New York Globe*, asking herself why the happy ending, superimposed after the first night on her play, *Miss Lulu Bett*, is inartistic. In an article which is intensely interesting and full of clearness, Miss Gale allows herself to ask why is marriage an inartistic ending at this moment.

Our position, for the purpose of argument, is impregnable, for we are not yet acquainted with Miss Gale's play and can virtuously repel the accusation of prejudice. For all that, we could answer her first question with our eyes shut and without having to look up more than two or three words in the dictionary. But we are too fascinated by the second question. It always disturbs us when people say "artistic (or inartistic) now." We always think of the gentle and earnest young woman (and her a mother!) who told us that *Othello* was a bad play now because people didn't, or at least shouldn't believe in jealousy and *Desdemona* was such a flabby character anyway. If Mr Kenneth Macgowan, to whose department in *The Globe* Miss Gale made moan, really wants to do the drama a service, let him give over the pedantic and tiresome discussion of the comparative merit of current and forgotten plays, and let him conduct a symposium under the general heading, *Has Modern Civilization Rendered the Bolster Inartistic as a Dramatic Expedient?*

It may be an impertinence to suggest that definition of the terms used in discussion is a valuable exercise. We aren't, really, obtuse and we know what Miss Gale was trying to say. We may even note, marginally, that marriage as an ending, if not as an end, has occupied our most serious thought. We consider that marriage between *Pickwick* and Mrs Bardell would have been inartistic even

*then*; and that marriage between Samuel Weller and the housemaid Mary was demanded by art no less than by nature. And we have also thought and made up our minds about the relation of the public moral conscience to the validity of works produced by the creative intelligence.

ONLY this year we heard a man of thirty announce that there had been no first-rate poet in France since Verlaine, and a man of sixty that there had been no poet anywhere since Tennyson. The expressions "poet" and "first-rate poet" are open to definition, but when you have said Verlaine or Tennyson you have said almost enough.

By collecting a series of such "reactions" one could reconstitute the history of artistic importation. Find the oldest native you can who will assure you that Cézanne is the last French painter, figure out the year of his twentieth birthday, and you will know the date at which Cézanne's work began to reach America.

There is no occasion for any one to give himself airs. The two gentlemen whose judgements we have reported were both "literary" in their way, had both printed their verse in periodicals. Creative artists are just as blind and deaf to new things after twenty as politicians, and women are as bad as men.

But there are ways of opening even the mind of a man of thirty. *THE DIAL* will go on inviting contemporary artists to touch off their little friendly charges of dynamite in the parietal bosses of its readers—believing grey matter is to be found inside.

WE are often asked by our subscribers and other readers in what ways we can use their good will. One way is this: whenever you answer an advertisement in *THE DIAL*, make it a point to call to the attention of the advertiser in what place you have discovered his wares. This applies, of course, quite as much to the man who buys in person as to him who orders through the mail. We are not catering to the oceanic public and our advertisements illuminate that fact. It behooves the scattered Sons of Light to make their sparse blows count.

